NBI files charges against Saycon, Kawal soldiers

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph | Tuesday, February 3, 2004 | 36 pages | vol. 19 | no. 57 | website: www.inq7.net

Montayre surfaces, also calls for 'No-el'

WHAT'S INSIDE

- T-bill rates rise — BUSINESS/B1
- PNP report identifies 12 Metro 'hot spots' — METRO/A15
- Suicide attacks re-unite Kurds, say leaders — WORLD/A8

Foreign investors dump RP stocks

Political instability, weakening peso cited

By Doris C. Dantes
Business

SPOOKED by mounting political uncertainties and weak regional markets, foreign fund managers dumped Philippine shares, causing the biggest single-day fall in 17 months.

The main share index fell 4.06 percent, or 61.25 points, to 1,447.05 on measure of PSE! section. It was the biggest decline since July 9, 2002 when the index tumbled 6.68 percent.

The market, which rallied to its highest in nearly three years last month, is now up just 0.32 percent so far this year.

"This is due to the country's political instability which has weakened the peso. In Chile's case huge factors. If you are a foreign investor, that's a double whammy," Ramon Sia, BPI Securities investment analyst, said.

The peso continued its early gains to close lower against the US dollar, weighed down by the steep decline in the local stock market. It ended 0.1 down at P56.348 against the dollar, weaker than the P55.900 on Friday.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the country's largest phone firm, led decliners, dropping 3.7% percent or P50 to P845. PLDT dropped down the market after its associate Digitel, lost Rosario shortly fell to the New York Stock Exchange last week. Second-ranked Globe Telecom Inc. fell 4.6% percent or P45 to P880.

"If shares of power distributor Manila Electric Co., which are open to foreigners, lost 7.05 percent or P2.50 to P33.50.

In the broader market, 71 stocks declined and only eight rose. There were 20 stocks unchanged.

"Foreign funds were selling heavily, apparently due to the results of last week," Sia said.

Financial deregulation plans are not helping market sentiment, according to Jones Ian Castillo, association of Securities analyst of the Philippines downtrend.

Sia Shiang government announcement said they were preparing actions that are against a retired general and three other people linked to from running presidential

FIRST PRINTING
Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos shows to journalists a sample of the official ballot during the first print run of ballots for the May elections at the National Printing Office in Quezon City. (Story on Page A4)

Gas prices increased anew by 80¢/liter

By Ramon W. Dominguez
Business

FOR THE THIRD time in two weeks, motorists will be paying more for their fuel after Eastern Petroleum Corp. and Pilipinas Shell pulled up prices of gasoline by 80 centavos each effective by 6:00 a.m. yesterday.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. raised its prices at midnight last night—80 centavos per liter of gasoline and 80 centavos for diesel and kerosene.

Shell said it was increasing the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by 75 centavos per kilogram starting at midnight Tuesday.

The oil companies said the new round of increases was largely due to the rising fuel prices abroad.

In the second week of January, oil companies raised their prices by 60 centavos per liter for gasoline, 50 centavos for diesel and kerosene, and 90 centavos for LPG.

A week before that, the oil firms increased diesel prices by 70 centavos but some by cents so they could comply with stricter standards under the Clean Air Act.

The last surprise diesel products to contain no more than 0.05 percent sulfur by volume. The previous maximum sulfur level was 0.2 percent.

Roberto Kintanar, Pilipinas Shell general manager for external affairs, said the latest price adjustment was a "partial price increase."

"We are implementing increases that are lower than our competitors, but we want to say what has to continue to [some have] price increases ... another round of increase this month," Kintanar said. "We are monitoring the market to see what can't move should be."

Eastern Petroleum's chair Presidente Marcelo said the actual rise in the cost of the fuel prod-

ANGEL Tracey Wade survived five days in a row on crackers.

Girl in crash survives on crackers

LOS ANGELES—A toddler survived for five days on crackers while clinging to the body of her mother after being trapped in the wreckage of a deadly car crash, police said.

The 3-year-old girl was found by a police patrol on Monday after surviving the accident and braving temperatures often less than 0°C. Her car careened off the road in an isolated part of the western state of Arizona last week.

"We found her ... in front a big house, in a stroller, standing next to her mother's

Asia's bird flu deaths rise to 12

BANGKOK—Two more people died from bird flu, bringing Asia's death toll to 12 on Monday. China said it suspected the virus has resulted possible in one of its most extensive outbreaks yet. UN officials warned that the outbreak was to hear over.

A teenage boy in Vietnam died Monday, and a 30-year-old woman in Thailand who had died on the same day were confirmed Monday as bird flu victims following an autopsy, officials said.

The bird flu sweeping the region in Viet Nam being under control," and Hk Chongchai of the IHS Bird and Agricultural Organization. "It remains a serious problem in health and animal threats, particularly in China, Thailand and Vietnam."

So far, more than 46 million chickens have been culled, including China' in efforts to contain the disease, he said.

The World Health Organization expressed investigating the deaths of four Vietnamese citizens who may have caught the disease through contact with their livelihood in what would be the first human-to-human transmission in the virus's outbreak.

But the WHO said there was no evidence yet of a new strain that can easily be passed among people.

Investigators have failed to trace the sisters' infection to a specific event, early in contact with sick poultry, or to establish

NPC divided into Poe, Macapagal factions

By Carlos Pobre

THE PRESIDENTIAL race has split the Nationalist People's Coalition, the country's second-largest political party, down the middle.

Yesterday, Rep. Francis Escudero (Sorsogon) announced he was running a team of almost-no

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo at the PCC for the handing of the "Family Health Insurance for All" program. With her are Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and PCSO Chair Hermogenes Luna.

spokespersons and member of the executive committee of the NPC, the party founded by business tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., to call his lot, together with about 22 other NPC congressmen, with opposition coalition candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

His father Eduardo is running for senator under the Poe ticket.

Earlier, a group of NPC congressmen, who numbering about 20, declared their commitment to support President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Escudero explained that NPC members would remain with the party even though they might support different presidential candidates.

NPC stalwart and Cojuangco nephew Rep. Gilberto Teodoro Jr. (Tarlac) said the party is angry with him.

"What is important for us are the local posts," Teodoro said, referring to the NPC's struggle to the congressional and gubernatorial positions.

GMA allots ₱3B for PhilHealth program

By Blanche S. Rivera and Juliet L. Javellana

EL WHAT the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. called "an unprecedented move," the government somehow said PhilHealth would accept five million locals of family as new members this year.

President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the ambitious extension of the national health insurance program, saying she had allotted P3 billion to it to fund it.

Philhealth president Francisco Duque III immediately vowed to implement that the "universal health insurance" program was meant to boost the Macapagal's electorate.

"The should not be misrepresented, partly as campaign move because this is just the completion

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2004

A2

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

NO KNOWN CURE
Ailing doctor counts his blessings

By Gone Z. Pacchayat

DIPAS GIRL: Four years ago, he was told he had only four more to three years to live. He remains hopeful but he has learned to accept his fate. KIMBERLY

House leaders defend stand on '03 budget

By Cynthia D. Bolivar

Senate makes last ditch effort to pressure House

By Christina O. Avendaño

NPAs ambush Army patrol; 4 soldiers, militiaman dead

Corpus scolded for calling Loren 'political prostitute'

By Nicole Papa

BUILDERS' DEPOT

The Leading One-Stop Construction Shop

is now in LIBIS (formerly Limeside Subic)

Fully airconditioned
With 3 levels of parking space good for more than 200 cars

We are now:

BIGGER
BETTER
CLOSER
to you

With 3 big Depots strategically located to serve you better.

ALABANG

LIBIS

BALINTAWAK

EDSA

A proud family of Wilcon Builder's Supply, Inc.

Photo shop worker says Manapat ordered microfilm

By Christine O. Avendaño

A PHOTO shop employee told a Senate inquiry yesterday it was he who processed the two rolls of microfilm that ex-Director Ricardo Manapat had claimed he had discovered in the National Archives' offices and which contained documents that proved that actor Fernando Poe Jr. was not a natural-born Filipino.

The documents were subsequently used by his disqualification case against Poe before the Commission on Elections.

Before the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, Wilkins Dolf, Davidson service supervisor, told the senators he was the one who put the microfilm rolls together in early January, on Manapat's orders.

At the same hearing, Manapat's driver linked the head archivist Jaed Ivler Dominguez, Jose Miguel Arroyo and Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio. Another archives employee linked Manapat to Atty. Rufino Alfonso of Arroyo adviser Jose Apostol.

Manapat did not show up at the Senate inquiry however.

Dolf's affidavit stated that Manapat went to the Portofino shop at Cubao Pilipino Street in Quezon, Manila on Jan. 10 and gave him 20 to 30 documents per roll of microfilm.

Dolf said his boss, Victor Flores, told him that Manapat did not want him to read the documents because they were "highly confidential."

Dolf said Manapat later asked him to print copies of a birth certificate on the microfilm and the way when he was able to read its contents. He said the birth certificate was of Allan Fernando Poe, the presidential candidate's father.

He said he was made to read another roll of film and this one contained a marriage contract between Poe and a Pedrito Gomez, as well as another document written in Spanish with the name of Gomez and Flores's endorsement Dolf's testimony.

At the same hearing, Manapat's driver, Rolando Lagming, said he had dropped Dominguez off twice in December at the DX Building on Pasay Road in Makati City, which happens to be the office building of Mike Arroyo.

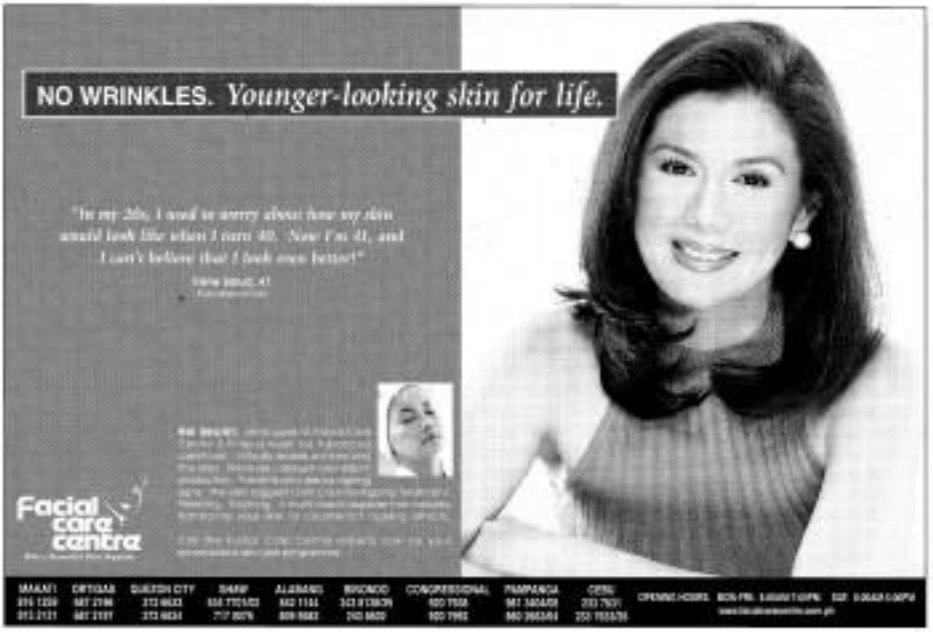
"Sir told me he had a meeting with his lawyers there," Lagming told the committee.

Lagming also said Manapat had asked him to drive archives employee Fernando Tolabia to Justice Carpio's office on Padre Faura Street in Manila to deliver an envelope on Jan. 5.

Tolabia corroborated this, saying he delivered a "sealed envelope."

It was also learned that Manapat had a meeting with Dominguez on Jan. 12 as shown by a file retrieved from the computer of another archives employee, Vicelei Dela. This was confirmed by Manapat's secretary Arlene Ramos. Tolabia and Dela had both quoted Manapat on Jan. 22.

In a statement, the Pilot Gentlemen's Lawyer Jose L. Batocabe said a connection between Arroyo and Manapat "simply defies rules and merely formed part of a... smear campaign which the 'five camp' is resorting to instead of addressing the substantive issue of the candidate's citizenship."



Chicken sales down; farmers eye exports

THE PHILIPPINES may have to tie escaped the bird flu sweeping through neighboring countries but its consumers are already shunning chicken, causing a slump in sales, an industry official said on Monday.

Ruben Pascual, head of an association of commercial chicken suppliers in the Bulacan, Pampanga and Batangas provinces, said sales had fallen 30 percent last week from the previous seven days.

Live chickens accounted for less than 20 percent of the total value of the country's P79-billion poultry industry in 2003.

Poultry accounts for 14.4 percent of the 20 percent share-taken up by agriculture in the country's gross domestic product.

Government officials alarmed by the fall in chicken sales have tried to assure the public that chicken products in the country are safe to eat.

"There is no reason to avoid a chicken meal," said Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, who hosted up-the-noodle by-chicken to friend of reporters yesterday.

San Miguel Foods Inc., a unit of San Miguel Corp., has a 15 to 40 percent share of the local chicken market, supplying fertilized chicken and eggs mainly to a service of Gvalifon people.

Purisima said the dinner could provide a number of opportunities for domestic beef growers, noting increasing imports from Japan, Singapore and Taiwan. Japan imports most of its chicken from the Philippines.

But industry officials believe it will take time for the country to become a major chicken exporter because production is too geared to serve it domestic consumption.

"It will take time for the country to prepare to export chicken," said Luis Lorenzo, the agriculture secretary.

Reuters

4 Customs execs charged over chicken smuggle

By Philip C. Tabosa

THE BUREAU of Customs has filed criminal charges against four of its officials and three civilians for allegedly smuggling P30 million worth of frozen chicken legs into Batangas.

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo Sheila case of technical smuggling with the Department of Justice last Friday against Customs Deputy Chief for Manila Head of the enforcement division at the Port of Batangas, customs appraisers Oscar T. Balicudio, and customs examiners Lignes R. Pascual and Luis R. Castillo. The civilians are Ramon Ang, importer Bernadito Ladores, his wife Raquel and broker Joy Sanal.

Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Apolinario Bautista said the respondents face recommended imprisonment. The DOJ is preparing a preliminary investigation on the case.

The seven respondents were charged after 19 refrigerated, 40-foot container vans of chicken parts arrived at the Port of Batangas on Jan. 23. Declared to be "cans of ground goods and polyester bags" the vans actually contained frozen chicken leg quarters.

Philippine Dog in violation of Republic Act 6469 were array explain Peter Edwin Roberts, Antonio Bautista, Dicky Ramirezdis, Marcos Serafica and Mohammad Yusof Hussin, as well as Lieutenant Colonel Philippine Allianz secretary general Patrick "Ben" Ramos and lawyer Alexdre Bellaza.

The charges were based on the affidavit of one Philippine flags arrest together and bearing the word "kawal" in yellow letters on the blue section. Kawal Pilipino was the name of a dark organization, the officers said.

The Dog was the recipient of the press conference called by the officers to reveal a supposed direct letter from Presidential Municipal spouse ordering the military to keep tabs on her political rivals and to discount the resignation of Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita in his involvement in the Muntinglupa campaign.

But Marianito Pangandiman, chief of the NBI's Special Task Force, said the agency has recommended the exclusion of Serafica and Ramos from the charges, as the two have turned state witness. Jose has had earlier said he had been duped by Honasan into attending the Peninsula meeting and he did not know what the meeting was about.

In the NBI charge sheet, Ingcon was identified as the one who urged the Kawal Pilipino members to accuse President Macapagal of ordering the military "to limit the actions of the other presidential candidates and destroy their chances of winning in the forthcoming national and local elections."

The charge sheet also said that while Honasan admitted to arranging the press conference, he claimed there was nothing "seditious" about it nor were there any plans to bring down the government.

The three officers who are facing military charges—Honasan, Kimenildo and Reyforce—underwent initial physical investigations at the Judge Advocate General's Office in Fort Bonifacio last Friday.

Their lawyer Rolando Mendoza has asked for a week's extension of the investigation to give them time to study the charges and prepare their counter-affidavits.

At the same time, Pangandiman said that no millions or corruption charges have been filed against the seven or the DOJ because the NBI had yet to gather enough evidence against them.

But of the investigation would involve getting the statements of the reporters who covered the Kawal Pilipino press conference at the Manila dividing home of Honasan.

Those to be questioned are GMA 7 broadcaster Arnold Clavio, Ellaine Morgia from the Inquirer group and Ed Zamora of Radio 702, according to Pangandiman.

Asked if the NBI would summon Sen. Loren Legarda and former military intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus for their probe, Pangandiman said the NBI "may act at that stage yet."

Corpus had alleged that Legarda and Ingcon had met several times before the Ayala-Makati press conference took place.

MOURNING IN NORWAY
Relatives at the delayed flight no. 997 Boeing Philpine cross arrives at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport last Sunday night. They attended the airplane disaster memorial service at the accident site in Norway. AGATA NOWICKA

Tancangco, Lantion bow out of Comelec

By Marvin P. Mariñ

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday vowed to maintain its impartiality even as two of its commissioners—last-minute Tancangco and Ralph Lantion—retired from service yesterday, leaving two of seven seats vacant.

The retirees were among four commissioners appointed by the late Pres. Ferdinand Emilio Marcos. Their departure means the Comelec will now have five appointees by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Although Malacañang has not yet announced a replacement, a "deal" is already being raised regarding the impending appointments, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos believes this is part of a "conditioning" scheme by the opposition.

They want to condition the minds of the people (to such a way) that if their candidates don't win in the May elections, Comelec and (or) they were cheated. They should stop doing this," Abalos told the INQUIRER. Yet, the 1 widge being driven through us, this insinuation that we were replacements," come in. The President could rule were us, it's very unfair."

Abalos was reacting to reports that opposition members were again criticizing the commission for the way it has been acting on the Poe-Arroyo-Roy Jr. disqualification case, saying the appointees were waiting for the appointment of the two new commissioners who would surely take the side of the administration.

The two equally unfair to the Estrada opponents, Abalos said, since it suggested that the two Comelec commissioners were always acting in favor of whoever appointed them.

He also assured the public that today's retirement would not have a serious effect on the poll body's operations. Abalos said Malacañang had assured the Comelec was a policy-making body, and that the "duty work" was being done by senior officials and field men.

Abalos said Malacañang had also assured the Comelec of the forthcoming appointments, but that one of the names being floated was that of Comelec Executive Director Maita Magsaysay-Ignacio.

He admitted that there were still between Tancangco and Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, who handled about 2 of the automatization program, which was pushed by the Supreme Court.

Apparently, Abalos said, Borra kept Tancangco in the dark regarding the computerization program to be installed in the counting machines.

In an earlier interview, Tancangco said there was "no interpretation(s)" in the creation of the software, and warned of a "chaotic crisis" that could be activated and used in thwarting without serious noticing.

Abalos said it was all just a "misunderstanding."

NEWSBRIEFS

'Hanging' rights bill

MANILA, Jan. 2 (PNA)—The bill to abolish the death penalty in the country, which was signed into law by former President Joseph Estrada in 1999, has been vetoed by President Arroyo.

The bill, which was signed into law by former President Joseph Estrada in 1999, has been vetoed by President Arroyo.

The bill, which was signed into law by former President Joseph Estrada in 1999, has been vetoed by President Arroyo.

Cuts to go vs Dueling

CEBU, Jan. 2 (PNA)—The bill to abolish the death penalty in the country, which was signed into law by former President Joseph Estrada in 1999, has been vetoed by President Arroyo.

The bill, which was signed into law by former President Joseph Estrada in 1999, has been vetoed by President Arroyo.

The bill, which was signed into law by former President Joseph Estrada in 1999, has been vetoed by President Arroyo.

NPO starts printing ballots for May polls

By Marvin P. Mariñ

THERE'S NO turning back.

The National Printing Office has started to print ballots for the May 10 elections, Lawyer Rufus Rodriguez, a representative of the opposition, told the government printing office yesterday. City to supply the procedures. He appeared satisfied with what he saw.

"There are some marks by Comelec (Commission on Elections) and the printing office. We are on our way. We have no objection," Rodriguez, who is representative of Cagayan de Oro, told reporters.

Under the law, the lawyer explained, they are allowed to observe the process from the start of the printing process until its completion.

"We are here to ensure the NPO that everything was in order and there will be no room for ballot-printing," he added.

Rodriguez watched while 237,327 ballots for overseas voters were printed at the National Printing Office in downtown QC.

Officials of the printing office said that it took them four hours and 25 minutes to print more than 150,000 ballots which will be shipped to overseas posts.

The first batch of ballots would be sent by midnight on March 12.

Printing started weeks after the Supreme Court ruled that Comelec's R.A. 7166 has not banned counting machine data, a decision which is being appealed by three candidates and the supplier.

If The Supreme Court decides in favor of automated counting, Elections Chief Benjamin Abalos yesterday said they can still implement selected automation.

"We are prepared for any and all eventualities. If the Supreme Court comes out with a decision on the 15th of this month, we can do selective automation," Abalos said.

PNB to keep $41M of $684-M Marcos loot

By Armando N. Nocum

PARABIS and human rights victims of hundred rally could end up getting $41 million as a result of an agreement between the government and the Philippine National Bank (PNB) involving the disposition of the $684-million Marcos gold hoard.

Based on the "deed of release and quit claim" entered into by the Philippine Commission on Good Government (PCGG) and the PNB, the bank could get about $14.7 million in "compromise fund" for possible lawsuits.

Besides the contingent fund, about $6.8 million, or one percent of the $684 million, will go to Swiss lawyer Jacqui Iakovou, whose law firm was tapped by the PCGG to handle the Marcos case in Switzerland.

The agreement between the PCGG and PNB was signed on Jan. 30 in compliance with the writ of execution issued by the Sandiganbayan for the transfer of Marcos deposits from the bank to the government coffers.

Malacañang chose to contract Philippine-based lawyers to handle the compromises of human rights victims. Part of the money will also be used to finance the government's land reform program.

LAWYERS ALL
James Gitelman passed the New York Bar Exams recently. He is the youngest son of Supreme Court Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez and the late MIG-Advertising Director Dr. Hyman A. Gitelman. With James are his mother, brother Prometeo, also a lawyer who graduated from the American University George Washington College of Law; his sister Alison, a State Prosecutor, and her husband, Robert C. Marcos, a law practitioner.

GMA allies bullish

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo ally Representative Fernando Perlas at the end of several campaigns to boost the supposed electronic marketing of the people already in the country, the Department of Mr. At least in the jurisdiction only conducted by the Social Weather Station Inc., but congressmen allied to the administration said yesterday it would be ready to start. The orders are getting ready to be sent out, Perlas said, adding that he intends to do it over his term, while the people are in no rush to spend money after the President has been doing," said administration Rep. Pompeyo Pichay (Lanao del Sur). Pichay predicted that Ms. Macapagal-Arroyo will win the race of presidential aspirant Fast Force, who for the first time was overtaken by President Macapagal in the SWS survey conducted in mid-January. "The President's coming to the presidential survey is clinical, clinical," he said. "Don't worry. I can (SWS survey showed Poe at the lead with 28 per cent, closely followed by Ms. Macapagal at 27 per cent and Roco at 18 percent. "Don't underestimate us," he said. "We are confident politically from the Visayas to Mindanao. We have a lot of points," Pichay said. "The winners SWS will emerge number one as early as March."

Cecilia Alano

REAL ESTATE

E-mail: p_real_estate@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar G. Hangaway

Price of owning condos competing with rental rates

By Tessa R. Salazar

A FEW years ago, owning a house near the office to the metropolis was an unimaginable to returning the lotto jackpot.

So, you flew to the presence of your landlord's stated terms of ₱10,000 and above for years on end. After so many years of backbreaking work, you find yourself looking your landlord in the face to tell him another month. How you would only just be a "homeless urbanite" (instead," since you would be too old to qualify as a "young" urban professional.

Affordable high-rise projects

But recent trends are showing that developers are now shifting their focus on affordable high-rise projects. Not yet quite affordable for many as there are still "but, but" clamps payments to consider most of these a rent, but the terms, nevertheless, have become more affordable for more "modest" papers. Look around and you may see 22-square-meter (or larger) studio-type condominium units in different parts of Makati, Manila and Ortigas—most strategically becoming within reach price-wise.

Active developers giving this to the next have been Megaworld and, lately, Ayala Land. Upscale developers such as Century Properties took its cue from and are now building the likes of BuLan Soho, units of which now only kick at low as ₱1.8 million, at a monthly rate of ₱8,000—almost the same as your apartment's monthly rent.

More studies, I BR

Colliers International Philippines takes note of this trend recently, saying that to make condominiums more affordable, developers introduced more studios and compact one-bedroom units in their mix.

Colliers International Philippines associates director for research and consultancy Richard Raymundo explains that this way, the total contract price would be controlled. He says, for example, that if a developer would like to sell a residential unit at ₱75,000 per square meter, a 30-sq.m studio would cost ₱2,250,000.

A 300-sq.m three-bedroom unit, for instance, would cost ₱22.5 million at the same per sq.m rate.

"Even if you introduce a good payment term for the 3-BR, the monthly amortization would still be too high. And at the end of the day, the developer will achieve the ₱75,000 per square meter rate," Raymundo explains.

Affordability concern have led to the emergence of the mid-to-some high-rise segments, he added.

Broad segment

The mid-income segment, however, is very broad. It also takes various forms—from condominiums to single-detached homes and townhouses. Ultimately, the price range is from ₱800,000 to ₱5,000,000, he says.

The trend of the affordable high-rise started after the Asian crisis in 1997, economist Raymundo. Developers had to reassess certain pre-upscale assets since but had to address affordability concerns. Thus, the trend for affordable high-rise.

Meanwhile, Colliers also notes that the market sector came and with mid-income high-rise projects, per the take up remains encouraging. Take up means the sales per month of a project.

"When the pre-sold condominium projects in 1996 to 1997, it was reporting more sales because there was no competition. Colliers observes that most projects are entering the segment, including Avida Land and Filinvest Land.

Another survey notes that the luxury 3-BR units have declined by nearly 40 percent from its peak down to ₱80,000/sqm. The drop in prices started in 1997 after the financial crisis. Luxury 3-BR units are usually located in Ayala Avenue and other Bonifacio and Rockwell.

Colliers also notes that land values had fallen by 60 percent from its peak now down to an average ₱37,000 sq m in the Makati CBD and ₱17,000 sq m in Ortigas.

Raymundo explains that while there haven't been much transactions in the market, it was inevitable for the prices to have dropped at those levels.

He recalls that the drop was due to the slowdown after 1997 turnovers. Inevitably, when rents and prices started to fall, land values could not be sustained at rates and price levels.

"If you were a developer you would not buy land at the same level as it was in 1997, as it will be impossible to make an acceptable profit margin. To keep a decent profit, the land values must also go down."

Retail sector

Meanwhile, retail consumption is being increasingly financed through debit/credit/automatic teller machines (ATMs) generated in malls and other retail shops.

Says Raymundo: "Our suspicion is that people are now starting to buy more with credit cards. That is why BSP (Central Bank) is starting to implement more guidelines for the reporting of credit card loans."

Another trend that has been observed is that developers are now into niche-marketing to differentiate their projects. The best examples would be the retail formats in Eastwood and also the new Greenbelt.

Office sector

Rents have fallen by 19 percent since 1997. There are rents in the Makati CBD and Ortigas in general.

Colliers also reports that the rents for the office sector would start to firm up towards the end of 2004.

"The underlying reason is the absence of new supply in fact, no new building will be completed in the Makati CBD for the next three years. In the meantime no cost space is absorbed. Landlords can increase their asking rents due to the tight-ening supply," Raymundo predicts.

NEARING COMPLETION
With only interior and exterior painting and roof plumbing works remaining, concrete tiles of the six-star 184 Gardens residential development by property developer Empire East Properties Inc. is now 98 percent complete. Positioning a ongoing for Classes A, which will be ready for turnover to individual unit owners this month.

Asia's largest trade fair opens March 16

By Charles F. Bukas

HUNDREDS of building and construction exhibitors from the Philippines will converge at the World Trade Center in Pasay City next month to participate in the World Building and Construction Exposition (WorldBuild 2004).

Scheduled on March 16-20, the trade exhibit will range world-class building materials, home improvement fixtures, business equipment and construction services, among others.

"WorldBuild 2004, now on its ninth year, will remain Asia's ultimate construction exposition," according to Joseph Ang, founding chair of WorldBuild Services International, the event organizer.

Booths

Over 5000 booths were set up the last year and attracted a record high of more than 45,000 trade professionals, contractors, manufacturers, distributors, exporters, importers, dealers, construction consultants and real estate investors 20 countries.

Countries which joined last year's expo include Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

"With a bigger exhibition space of 8,000 square meters, we are confident that this year's event will be even better than last year in terms of number of participating international and local exhibitors and business to be generated," said Ang.

Chronicle

The five-day expo will not only attract big businesses in the field of building and construction, but also individuals who simply want to improve their homes and their backgrounds.

"This event ensures that even small clients, like homeowners, couples, small businessmen and homeowner-builders, get their need," explained Ang.

Products to be showcased include those for interior design and renovation, building materials, home improvement fixtures, business equipment, construction needs, and related housing services, mechanical and electrical engineering systems, security and fire equipment, information technologies and telecommunications at do-it-yourself prices.

"Here they can find home fixtures like doors and windows, bathroom furnishings, such as tiles and even the smallest items like towel holders, soap dispensers and shower heads," revealed Ang.

Partnerships

Ang is confident that new business partnerships will be forged and old ones renewed during the WorldBuild 2004.

"WorldBuild 2004 is the perfect venue to open major gateways of opportunities in the building and construction industry in the country" he said.

He also added that WorldBuild is still accepting exhibitors and may call 335-6374 and 551-6958 or e-mail info@worldbex.com. Other information can be mailed at www.worldbex.com.

My Dollar Store now in Edsa Central

BY THEIR TIMES in the US and Canada stores, Hoanne Ting Quinquiamanand and Ormad Ting would patronize the ubiquitous dollar stores where everything sells for a dollar or less. The Ting ladies, doing with another sibling, liked the idea of one-price shopping (described in the US as "the fastest concept in retailing"), and decided to bring Mr. Dollar Store to the Philippines, right at the heart of value shopping—the Edsa Central Cubao/Edsa district in Mandaluyong.

While the store name implies selling goods at the price of a dollar, the Edsa outlet is no more a single price scheme for all merchandise as the Philippine cashier sells items for ₱99 or less. Many shoppers are acquainted with the ₱99 store concept but Hoanne and Ormad observed that increasing local consumers are mainly on apparel and accessories. The two young owners say that their store offers a more complete shopping experience because it has an amazingly diverse array of merchandise—from apparel, shoes, bags, cosmetics, bathroom items, toys, food, home decor, school supplies, baby garments, eyeglasses, laundry stuff, party items, personal care products and stationery, among others. Prices of My Dollar Store in the stores are pleasantly surprised to find how its outlet dollar store to the value shopping mall at the corner of Edsa and Shaw.

"Our store is different from available elsewhere in the country as clients are happy to know that they can now get their favorite products here in Edsa Central," says Hoanne.

The Quinquiamanand shopping line however somewhat reminded For customers because of inappropriate store layout, incomplete merchandise and sometimes pricey. But My Dollar Store is organized, well-stocked, convenient and "friendly". Sure, you can leave a quick pre-retained shopping, or you can take your time researching the novel items without having to check and check the pricetag.

Bundle proposition

"Some items go for ₱99 but smaller items are just duped together and then sold for ₱99," Hoanne explains. "We have bundled those in different packages, like a pack of 3 pens, or 4 chocolate bars for ₱99." But the shoppers is not limited by the "bundle proposition." You can mix and match from different products that add up to ₱99 for example, a food item and a pen if you have the option to buy only one item a bundle of two to find your purchase amounts to one half of ₱99. Ormad adds, "The concept of the store is value shopping, so we really try our best to make the pricetag competitive as we can from the start. Our store is the outlet's opening in mid-December, the siblings are glad to report that sales have been good.

Franchise store

Mr. Dollar Store states on its website how both the Wall Street Journal and USA Today have reported that "Dollar Stores are one of the fastest growing new business opportunities" Several dollar stores operate in the Central Dollarstore Corp., the store's parent company, is the only company of its kind that grants franchising opportunities to would-be outside investors. The Edsa Central outlet is actually the first and only store in Asia as the Philippines team expects franchise-dollar in the region. Besides the Philippines, the Dollar Store operates in countries like India, Indonesia, Mexico and El Salvador.

Banking a franchise store that is continents away from the parent company is not an easy feat but the ladies are up to the challenge and started about after last ahead. "Due to franchise business so we're doing everything we can to smoothen the operation and then we're going to have a franchisee one eventually. There are certainly challenges to overcome but we get a lot of support from our mother company. We have a system that is similar to theirs and computer system that handles inventory to save handling techniques. "My Dollar Store" in Edsa Central is the siblings' second business venture; their first being elegant boutique.

Value-for-money shopping

My Dollar Store's concept of expressing and value for money shopping is in line with Edsa Central's concept of providing the best, most accessible in terms of value and location to thousands of customers every day.

Interstate Development Corp., developer of Edsa Central, is the owner of the 6-storey office space complex, while catering to familiar value-shopping people, will now have five more locators in the Edsa Central Pavilion which is themselves a food shopping area, a supermarket, a pharmacy, the one-stop Edsa Central mall, a public transport terminal with security cameras, service stations and fast food outlets. The Edsa Central Pavilion is a value shopper's heaven. Its Edsa Central Mall is a value shopper's heaven. Its Edsa Central Mall is a value shopper's heaven. Its Edsa Central Mall

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo checks the condition of Marites Espaldon, a patient at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center

GMA allots ₱3B …

From page A1

of our commitment to the universal health insurance coverage as mandated by Republic Act No. 7875, the enabling law of Philhealth," Arroyo said.

But the President herself hailed the steps even when, escorted by Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, she gave out 100 Philhealth cards to new indigent members in the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center yesterday. The cards have free validity.

She also did the rounds of the hospital, shaking hands with patients. At one point, the even-toned to use a stethoscope.

Similar Philhealth cards were distributed to some 300 new members in Cebu, Davao and Baguio. The cards would be eligible for an annual update, Philhealth officials said.

"The poor will have dignity now because they will no longer be service patients. They will be paying patients because of their cards," said Cirilito Montano, head of the Philhealth regional office in Davao. Contributing office, during the launch of the program.

National convention

Speaking before the first national convention of the Philippine Social Security Association, Ms Macapagal said the lack of universal health insurance needed to be addressed.

"Our main is hard to face about the lack of sustainability or access to health services but now we are facing it squarely," Ms Macapagal said.

From the Philippine International Convention Center, where the assembly was held, the President flew soon to the Jose Reyes Hospital.

Ms Macapagal, who is seeking reelection in May, said the best way of helping the poor through social insurance was to shore up the resources of all the social services agencies and to pack investments and employment programs so that more employers can pay the health insurance premium.

She said that in the short period of her presidency, the majority of Filipino families had been included under Philhealth coverage.

"Of course, this is just a down payment and the succeeding installment is we will try to make it universal," she said.

"Also! But one many of our people are sick but same they could not afford the cost of hospitalization. They could not be admitted to the hospitals. So now they could not pay the deposit anymore," she said.

She said one sick member meant a poor family would have to pawn one day without food.

"We are forced to borrow from our neighbors to pay the hospital, medicines and doctor's fee. And when an operation is needed, some patients just go home because they don't have the money," she said.

"This should not be the case. Health is every Filipino's aim," she said.

Universal coverage

The law mandates 100-percent coverage of family care members by 2010, but since the program took off only in 1997, the government has extended its deadline to five years.

The extension program announced yesterday seeks to include, through free million family of Gandia, a total of 5.5 million indigent members.

Some 4.6 million indigents were enrolled in the Philhealth as of last year. The government has waived the payment of ₱1,200 as premium for poor members whose monthly family income is only of ₱10,000 to ₱12,000.

With the addition of 23 million indigent members, Philhealth's projects on 47-percent coverage of the total population by planned, upfront about 93 percent.

Members and indigent members admitted in hospitals retained by the Department of Health would not be required to pay anything in excess of their Philhealth benefits.

An administrative order issued by Dayrit has effectively mandated all DOH hospitals to shoulder the cost of hospitalization to excess of what Philhealth could cover.

Ms Macapagal said the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office would provide half of the ₱3 billion needed to finance the program, and half would be taken from the national government specifically from the financial assistance fund for local government units.

"We can also tap the resources of the private sector for subsidized hospitalization, depending on how big the expenses would be, including the personnel for the rooms, doctor and the cost of medicines, laboratory, X-ray and specialists, if necessary," she explained.

Local complaints

Measures and funding for the program are supposedly a joint venture of the national and local governments, but local executives have constantly complained of lack of money for the program.

The local governments are expected to have a list of indigent families in their areas whom they would refer to the Philhealth for free membership. The distribution of slots per municipality or city depends on the poverty incidence in the area.

Indigents who may not be listed in their municipalities or cities can go to their barangays and refer for Philhealth membership. The barangay officials will then refer them to the Department of Social Welfare and Development for a house visit or to verification of their economic status.

The DSWD will furnish the local governments the names of poor families who are qualified for the program. The process in the future will be referred first for Philhealth services, Abalos said.

In her SCC speech, Ms Macapagal also announced that no "555 Emergency Line" will be fully operational by May of the month, initially in the 555 head office in Quezon City.

"The Emergency line project provides free medical and social assistance for 555 members. By now it is once a month. It started last Friday and it will be held at the 555 head office every last Friday of the month and will soon be replicated in all what hubs of the system. If this is successful and patronized by our passengers, we can hold it more frequently," she said.

Asia's bird flu deaths rise to 12

From page A1

mental source. Neither human-to-human transmission nor direct contact with sick poultry can be ruled out, according to the WHO.

Health officials may soon be able to confirm other suspected cases, as part tissues via the brother's remains already have been examined.

"The situation is always going to have a question mark hanging over it," WHO spokesperson Bob Dietz said yesterday.

No other cases of people catching the virus from either people have been suspected anywhere else.

The death of the teenage boy came early Monday in Vietnam's Hospital for Tropical Diseases in Ho Chi Minh City, according to hospital deputy director Tran Tinh Hien. The youth was admitted last Thursday.

The deaths announced Monday in Thailand happened earlier, but health officials did not immediately say when. The unidentified 30-year-old woman from Suphanburi province was suspected to have suffered from bird flu, Public Health Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan said.

Bird flu has struck poultry in at least 10 Asian countries, but infections in people have been reported only in Thailand and Vietnam.

Spreading in China

China announced five new suspected cases in poultry on Monday, including one in its remote northwestern region of Xinjiang—underlining the potentially broad range of the disease. Xinjiang is more than 2,000 km from the southwestern region of Guangxi, where China's first case of bird flu was confirmed last week.

With the new report, China now has three confirmed cases and eight suspected ones in a total of 31 regions spanning the country.

The WHO on Saturday urged Chinese authorities to step up efforts to contain the virus. Its chances to contain the disease may be dwindling. Beijing has closed poultry markets and processing factories in some bird flu-affected areas.

The OIE appealed for international aid for Asian countries, saying they may otherwise run out slaughtering their flocks, a crucial measure in stamping out the disease and preventing human cases.

Where the deaths of the two sisters were announced last Wednesday in Vietnam, the director of Vietnam's Institute of Classic Research for Tropical Medicine said the sisters had helped their brother handle chickens at his middling-weight farm. Dr. 2.

However, the WHO said Monday that the sisters fell ill about a week after their brother died, which indicates the sister did not get sick from the same exposure. The evidence suggests two different sources of infection, Dietz said.

Limited human-to-human transmission of the virus is not the real danger. What experts fear is the new mutating into a form that passes easily between people—a pandemic strain due to a hybrid of the bird virus and a normal human influenza virus.

No new strain

There is no evidence that a new strain has emerged, WHO spokesperson Maria Cheng said. Results from tests comparing the genetic make-up of the virus found in the two Vietnamese sisters will that found in other people are injected from Hong Kong to several days, she said.

Bird flu spread between humans in a 1997 outbreak in Hong Kong that killed six people.

Then, the virus passed from infected people to health workers but soon fizzled out and failed to transmit further. Symptoms were only mild or inconsistent in those who caught it from patients after that death.

The virus also died in 1997 all contracted the virus from chickens. All cases of human-to-human transmission reviewed, raising doubts about whether the flu-human strain caught the killed strain it touched his chest.

Experts believe Hong may have been avoided a global pandemic that seen by slaughtering its entire chicken population in three days.

The WHO embraced tests showing that bird flu has been in wild since last April, saying the virus has not succeeded in infecting humans on a large scale despite having many more months of opportunity than originally believed.

The disease also is being battled in Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan. However, the death of bird flu outbreaks Taiwan and Pakistan is different from the one hitting the other countries and is not considered a serious threat to humans. AP

WITH the last of his birds and as medical experts arrange to kill his wife, Ariel, who chickens still seem to London Boonyaprapa, Bagnia City does his regular routine preparing "pinikpikan," a ritual chicken-cum-dish and popular Cordillera delicacy.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CEBRELLA AP (Republic Act No. 8439, as amended) ... they have operations ... in a prosecution for illegal sale of dangerous drugs, when a prosecution is proof that the accused peddled illicit drugs, coupled with the presentation in court of the corpus delicti. The testimonies of the buy-bust team established that an operation was legitimately and successfully carried out to entrap appellant. The positive identification of appellant by the prosecution as the one who peddled the dubious substance personally coupled with the illicit sale as he is the boss witness in the transaction. Moreover, the testimony was corroborated in every material detail by the other operatives who participated in the buy-bust operation. The court is not unaware that in drug-related cases, frame-up and "buhlisap" are the common and standard line of defense. In the case at bar, the fact that this is the second time appellant was caught in flagrante in possession of the suspected are immaterial and insufficient to reverse his conviction. It is settled that the more than a dozen times, one would need not be proved either it is an essential element of the crime. Nonetheless, in this case, prosecution witnesses and arresting officers testified to denial of the accused-appellant in a legitimate buy-bust operation. The wrong done of entrapping to the Booking Desk/Arrest Report was sufficiently clarified as the record as it appears to be a mere clerical error committed by the person who typed the report and reported the complete Last Name, the fact that the police officers at the incident to cite the defense theory of bribing, as testified to by the appellant, his uncle and girlfriend, should be rejected in November 12, 1998. Neither is the claim of denial of the plaintiff, but considering the corroborated clear, undeniable for appellant's conviction. [Criminal case no.] | District Penal, Third Division, People vs. Chua, G. R. No. 144313, September 3, 2003] BY R. B. VERA

NPC divided into Poe, Macapagal factions

From page A1

The NPC has 62 members in the House of Representatives and at least 20 governors. It is toward only in strength to the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats.

Insiders conceded that the NPC was divided when it announced that Mr. Macapagal had fine. He emphasized, however, that the party remained united.

Local politics

Insiders noted that he was running for re-election as Batangas congressman under the NPC.

He explained that he decided to take a leave of absence as NPC spokesperson and executive committee member to "avoid conflict because the party has made no decision yet whom to officially support."

"I don't want to involve," Recadore said.

Recadore said he had informed party leaders, including Ocampo, who is the chairman-like, about the decision to go on leave.

Insiders gave an ambivalent about which of the presidential candidates he was going to support.

Rep. Hilde Ocampo (Bangsamoro), one of two Ocampo's now in Congress, excited said he was among the leaders of Pangasinan backing the President's election bid.

Rival politics

For her part, Ms Macapagal has moved to remove vice-mayor Rilad, with her recent appointment of a union of the Tourism class as head of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA).

Casimiro Tiaoco III, son of former Rizal Gov. Casimiro Tiaoco Sr, said he met Gov. Rebecca Tiaoco, installed his 3rd Day in office yesterday. He was appointed on Friday.

The couple are close friends of deposed President Joseph Estrada. Tiaoco, in fact, is seeking reelection officially under the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, Estrada's party. He will run under the NPC in 2004.

Tiaoco confirmed that Ms Macapagal was considering his support.

"President Gloria continues to court us. We talk to each other once a week. It's normal. Other politicians like Dan Fonacier Lacson, Homer Saluncon Jocson, Jacy Rasul Bono and Chel. Edgardo Angara are courting me as well," Tiaoco said in a phone interview.

Rizal has around 730,000 registered voters, many of whom crossed for Estrada in 1992 and 1998, when he ran and won as vice president and president, respectively.

Tiaoco said he had until March 25, the start of the local campaign period, to decide whether to support Ms Macapagal. "We are in the process of consulting our political leaders about it," he said.

He said Ms Macapagal had "crossed" Bono with, helping Rizal in its projects.

"Who, one we would support politics, there would be a loss for it. And the people would lament it," he said. With a report from Jaime del Puerto

FRANCHISE SEMINAR

Learn all about Franchising, developing your business into a franchise, selecting a franchisee, etc. — conducted by foreign Franchise Consultant with 25 years experience in 3 Continents & got introduced to: Australian Franchisees.

Wednesday, February 11, 2004 — 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Saffron Room, CENTRIS Pensacost, Kalayaan Ave., QC

Seminar Fee: Early Bird Rate P 995. For details please call

RK FRANCHISE CONSULTANCY (02) 912-2668 / 912-2672

Email: rk@rkfranchise.com Website: www.rkfranchise.com

CURE BAD BREATH NOW!

OFFICE CLUB.com

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 3, 2004

Ash Wed. in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jn 1:10-18, 1:4, 24-25...Mt 19:3

Gospel: Mk 9:11-13

Jesus crossed to the other side of the lake and while he was still on the shore, a large crowd gathered around him. Jesus, recollected the synagogue, came up and invited him, threw himself at his feet and asked him reasonably, "My little daughter is on the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may get well and live."

Jesus went with him and many people followed, pressing them every side. Among the crowd was a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a lot at the hands of many doctors and had spent everything she had, but instead of getting better, she was worse. Since she had heard about Jesus, she worked came up behind him and touched his cloak, thinking, "If I only touch his clothes, I shall get well." She then at blood dried up at once, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her complaint.

But Jesus was conscious that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples answered, "You see how the people are crowding around you. Why do you ask who touched me?" But he kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, aware of what had happened, came forward trembling and threw herself at his feet. She told him the whole truth.

Then Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has cured you; go in peace and be free of this illness."

While Jesus was still speaking, some people arrived from the official's house to inform him, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Master any further?" But Jesus ignored what they said and told the official, "Do not fear, just believe." And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James and John, the brothers of James.

When they arrived at the house, Jesus saw a great commotion with people weeping and wailing loudly. Jesus entered and said to them, "Why all this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep."

They laughed at him. But Jesus sent them outside and went with the child's father and mother and his companions into the room where the child lay. Taking her by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha kum!" which means, "Get up, girl, to you!"

The girl got up at once and began to walk around. (She was twelve years old.) The parents were astonished, greatly astonished. Jesus ordered them not to tell this to anyone and told them to give her something to eat.

Commentary:

Synagogue official's office — rather than a synagogue office. (Lk 13:14) we are all synagogues, for it says that Jesus healed on and he on the Sabbath. But in today's reading we see one who "threw himself at Jesus' feet and asked him earnestly" to heal his little daughter who was dying. It would be great if we knew what it was and were official! There is nothing like a crisis to create our humanity, not any kind of crisis, but one of the heart. Any crisis that only challenges your mind is not deeply challenging; you are not really open till your heart is open. Your mind looks is not your mind but your heart. Only a soul-searched morning can open your mind, but there is no way that we are open till your heart is opened. In now in the official had to take child to consider he or official and his sick heart.

Clarence Bakkenson sjs., Officium S. 13th Ave., Bakkenson Campus, Box 237, Box 4, Delmar, 203 Jesuits Rd., Rt. 4A, 4444, Inc., 555-9999, E-mail: sjs@jesuit.org, Website: http://www.bakkenson.org/jesuit/clarence.htm) http://www.bakkenson.org/jesuit/clarence.htm

Don't Be The Last To Know

Sometimes, if you're having hearing problems, those around you know it before you do. Make sure your hearing is not a problem others have to deal with. Siemens™ offers the latest in hearing testing technology and a full range of Siemens digital hearing aids.

Call us for a FREE HEARING TEST!

SOUNDTECH

THE ANSWER TO COLD EARLY MORNING SHOWERS

BHAGWAN Electric Heaters

ELECTRO BHAGWAN

Digitemp

BHAGWAN HEATER CORPORATION

Have a SMART start this 2004...use the MSI Business I.T. Solution Softwares.

PAYROLL

...ensures FAST, COMPLETE & ACCURATE computation of payroll and generation of government requirements requirements.

DAILY TIME RECORDING **DTR**

...a Time Keeping Software that keeps track employee's attendance, absences, tardiness, UT and OT records.

PERSONNEL INFO. SYSTEM **PIS**

...displays comprehensive 201 Files, and prints pre-defined personnel forms.

● OTHER PRODUCTS:

PROFIT RETAIL (Systems Inventory • Sales Manager) • Point-of-Sale • Purchase Order • A.R. | MSI Accounting System

ATTN.: MSI PAYROLL USER

Latest version of the new PHIC Table for Premium Contribution for 2004 is now available.

FREE DEMO w/In MSL

We must only simplified I.T., we make I.T. even more cost-efficient.

With 10 years of quality service to only 1,000 corporate users.

METROSOFT, INC.

Packaged Systems Applicable Provider.

Keep the customer smiling.

Well trained people can do the job. Training makes it happen!

Sales and service is part of every business. Keep the customer smiling, increase sales and profits with John Robert Powers customer satisfaction achievement workshops.

Get the results you want with a program just right for your time, staff. Call us today to arrange a free consultation. Or a workshop program custom designed to fit your training objectives and needs.

Call Now! 892-9511

John Robert Powers

CUSTOMIZED CORPORATE TRAINING WORKSHOPS. FREE CONSULTATION

The WORLD

Edna Lorraine B. Garcia

Suicide attacks to unite Kurds, say leaders

IRBIL, Iraq—The twin suicide bombings that killed at least 56 people in the country's two main rival Kurdish parties aimed to the United States will only serve to unite them and strengthen their resolve for self-rule within a federal Iraq, their leaders say.

The near-simultaneous attacks on Sunday killed many of the top leaders of the two parties, who were gathered to greet hundreds of ordinary Kurds on the first day of the four-day Eid-al-Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice, holiday.

More than 235 people were injured in the two party offices. It was again on the headquarters of Iraq's minority Kurds who have been the most supportive of the US invasion and occupation.

Also Sunday, a rocket attack on a US supply base in Balad south of the capital Baghdad killed one and injured 12 including two servicemen. Another soldier was killed Sunday and two others were shot dead by Kurdish security personnel near the town of Kalak Ba.

The deaths raised to 524 the number of US service members who have died since the war began in March.

The suicide attacks were carried out by two men believed to be Islamic clerics with explosives vests to their bodies, Kurdish television said.

One of them joined the Eid celebrations at the Kurdish Democratic Party, which is under the chairmanship of Massud Barzani, and the other entered into the office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, centered in the neighboring Sulaimaniyah province.

Guards said they did not search people because of the tradition of receiving guests during the holiday.

At about 10:40 a.m., the two bombers, standing amid a sea of well-wishers wanting to shake hands with Kurdish leaders, detonated the explosives.

Wally Goran, in the ruling coalition because of the efforts and dedication of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, centered in the neighboring Sulaimaniyah province.

The KDP leadership took the heaviest blow since it is issued to hold. 320 km north of Baghdad. Among the dead were Irbil Governor Mustafa, Deputy Gov. and KDP Chief, Prime Minister Nasir Abdul Rahman, his two sons as well as ministers in the Kurdish administration. The PUK's military commander also was killed.

Military of both parties had fought alongside US soldiers during the invasion of Iraq last year, but also have been cited for its power as the Kurdish self-rule region since 1991 even through they participate in a responsible government.

But the tragedy brought the two factions together, at least for the time being. AP

Bush orders intel failures investigated

WASHINGTON — President George W. Bush, under mounting political pressure, will sign an executive order to establish a full-blown investigation of US intelligence failures in Iraq, a senior White House official said.

The investigation will look at what the United States believed to have been the case against Saddam Hussein's regime and what has been determined since the invasion. Former chief weapons inspector David Kay has concluded that Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction, a chief rationale for the US-led war.

The investigation will examine not only Iraq but also intelligence issues involving such countries as North Korea, the official said Sunday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Lawmakers from both parties say America's credibility has been undermined by uncertainty over flawed intelligence that led the United States into war in Iraq. Republican senator Democratic in calling for an investigation.

"I don't see Bush's say very strong," Sen. Chuck Hagel, a senior Republican member of the Senate Foreign relations committee, said Sunday on CBS/TV.

"We need to open this up in a very comprehensive, outside-our-administration, as see where we are," Hagel said. The issue is not just about coverage of US intelligence, he said, but "the credibility of the way we work in the world and the trust of our government and our leaders." AP

THOUSANDS of pilgrims are their pebbles at stone pillars representing Satan in Mina, Saudi Arabia, where hundreds of Muslims were trampled to death during the climax of the annual hajj pilgrimage on Sunday. AFP

Stoning rituals continue despite 244 deaths

MINA, Saudi Arabia—Waves of pilgrims were scuffed or shoved violently through the tunnels for devil-stoning rituals Monday, a day after 244 people were crushed to death during the same rites at the annual Muslim pilgrimage.

Ambulances were seen whisking away a few pilgrims overcome by the crush on Monday, but no further deaths were reported. Their conditions weren't known, but pilgrims sometimes faint from exhaustion or suffocating in steamy conditions.

Most of those killed in Sunday's tragedy on the plains of Mina outside Islam's holy city of Mecca were Asians, with the biggest number of dead identified thus far from Indonesia and Pakistan, the official Saudi News Agency reported.

It was the worst tragedy to occur on many at the annual Muslim pilgrimage, which is often marred by deadly fires, stampedes and riots.

Fifty-four Indonesians and 36 Pakistanis were among the dead, the agency said. Others killed in the crush were from Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, India and Bangladesh. SPA reported. It said other pilgrims to die in the stampede were from China, Senegal, Chad, Afghanistan and several African countries.

Two of the dead were Saudis, and 53 bodies remained unidentified, SPA said.

The crowd got out of control on Sunday as people moved along a wide ramp leading to the "stoning of the devil" rituals—where pilgrims throw pebbles at three stone pillars, symbolizing their contempt for the devil. Saudi authorities said that with pressure from behind, a few pilgrims fell down and people stepped on them.

Many Muslims who have gone to mark the ritual have borrowing rules to tell about being swept away by the crowds, and being forced to step on the bodies of those crushed to death. Pilgrims of to save stampeded to death on their way to the stoning ritual in 1994, 1990, 2001 and last year.

"All precautions were taken to prevent such an incident, but this is God's will," Saudi Hajj Ministers Iyad Madani said Sunday. "God rewards pilgrims from here."

Atiq Muneer al-Tanki of the Saudi General Security said forces and about 10,000 security officers were on duty at the time of the tragedy.

There were several such incidents the pushing in about 31 minutes, but already 244 people had been killed and a similar number in panic, some of them critically.

A pilgrim who was performing the hajj for a third time, Imad Hindun, said Sunday that the approach to the stoning was always "dangerously overcrowded." AP

4 militants die in Israel operation

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Israeli soldiers killed four Palestinian militants in a raid on Monday in one armed land in the southern Gaza Strip, the Islamic group, in an intense gun battle in a Gaza refugee camp, Israeli military officials said.

The Israeli troops came under fire as they attempted to enter the militant hideout, Nasser Abu Ayish, at his home and ransacked his. The army confirmed three militants had been killed, while one soldier was lightly injured.

Palestinian witnesses said four people were killed and the militant's house in the Rafah refugee camp was destroyed. Abu Ayish, said his brother at one point ran out of ammunition, witnesses said. The army said soldiers searching the building after the firefight found the militant leader's body inside the house.

Abu Ayish's legs and arms were blown off his rear when a rocket he was building exploded prematurely, the witnesses said, while residents of the Israeli Jihad military wing in the Rafah area, said was mainly involving in building home-made rockets, the one that killed Abu Ayish.

The Israeli operation came a day after soldiers crossed out, a similar raid in the West Bank town of Jenin. One militant was killed.

Israel Radio, an official in Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office described the raids as part of an "intensive" search and arrest" operation. "We will do our best for these arrests but needs to shore up on our discomfort," he said.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and Mahmoud Abbas and the heads of various Islamic groups were expected for negotiations.

Mohar issued the threat on response to a declaration by the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheik Mohammed Yassin, that Hamas was ramping up all-out efforts to destroy Israel soldiers. AP

TERRORIST THREAT
A police officer stands guard at London's Heathrow Airport following a credible threat that prompted the cancellation of British Airways flight to the Chiefs International Airport outside Washington.

Pakistan hero confesses to nuke transfers

ISLAMABAD—The founder of Pakistan's nuclear program, Abdul Qadeer Khan, has admitted he transferred nuclear technologies to Iran, Libya and North Korea, a Pakistani government official said Monday.

Khan made the confession in a written statement submitted "a couple of days ago" to investigators probing allegations of nuclear proliferation by Pakistan, the official said on condition of anonymity.

The statement were made during the late 1980s and in the early and mid 1990s, and were motivated by "personal greed and ambition," the official said.

The official said the transfers were not authorized by the government.

A meeting of the National Command Authority that controls Pakistan's nuclear assets was headed on the statement at a meeting on Saturday, when Khan—long regarded as custodian of here in Pakistan—was declared a hero for his position as a scientific adviser to the prime minister.

Two senior military officials briefed a number of Pakistani journalists late Sunday about Khan's statement. Khan had previously been reported as denying any wrongdoing.

But told journalists that Khan admitted to selling outdated technology and materials to Iran, Libya and North Korea in exchange for money.

Khan's confession was made after the transfers to Libya and Iran were also mentioned by visiting to help arms Muslim countries because nuclear powers, said two journalists who attended the briefing.

The government official said The two-month probe into the proliferation allegations had reached its conclusion, but said a wrap up to the authorities to decide whether to prosecute Khan and six other suspects in the case.

President Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who heads the authority, is due to make an address to the nation about the progress of the investigation of the Muslim holiday of Eid-al-Adha, the feast of sacrifice, which ends Thursday in Pakistan, officials said.

Pakistan began its investigation last November after revelations by Libya as in the International Atomic Energy agency, the UN nuclear watchdog. Allegations of nuclear transfers to Libya and North Korea have also surfaced.

The government official said that "questions have been put" to nuclear Army chiefs, Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg and Gen. Jehangir Karamat, who held information provided by Khan and other suspects during the "debriefings"...as the government has refused to the questioning of scientists. AP

7 Columbia shuttle astronauts honored

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida—The United States held memorials on Sunday, with more due on Monday for the seven Columbia shuttle astronauts who died a year ago when their ship disintegrated over Texas and Louisiana.

On Feb. 1, 2003, startling pieces of the shuttle falling like a shooting star dominated news broadcasts, shocking the country.

The country remembered the tragedy in various ceremonies, and during the 53 second sports extravaganza, the 38th American football Super Bowl.

Here at Cape Canaveral's Space Shuttle Memorial, seven 300 people gathered in gloomy weather for a commemoration of the one-a-year ago that astronauts were honored looking.

"The shuttle wasn't actually in vial," said Kennedy Space Center director Jim Kennedy. "It was a beginning."

He spoke of efforts by NASA to build in progress in the wake of the tragedy which was also the subject of a roughly independent inquiry. But the space program got a boost last month when President George W. Bush announced long-term plans for a new moon program and manned missions to Mars.

"There was will not be to stay," Kennedy of the Columbia's crew: Rick Husband, Willie McCool, Michael Anderson, David Brown, Laurel Clark, Kilpatrick Chawla and Ilan Ramon, Israel's first astronaut.

"The will come back bigger, better and stronger than ever before, and I can assure you that the crew and beloved families will never ever be forgotten."

Kennedy and the Astronauts Memorial Foundation president Stephen Feldman, placed a wreath of red, white and blue flowers in front of the black granite Space Shuttle Memorial. Mourners throughout the day.

Before Sunday's Super Bowl, CBS television was to close the week group Aerosmith rolling Rock Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, collect this week. The group was scheduled to perform a tribute song for the Columbia crew.

Astronauts of the next Kennedy Space shuttle mission were to be recognized on the football field when the astronauts sing home-town-style football fans.

A packaging donated as an astronaut and wedding a US flag symbolized the homecoming of astronauts rolling on the ocean. AFP

Democratic rivals race through key states to sway undecided

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico — The Democratic presidential contenders are targeting key states and voting voters in the closing hours before the biggest campaign test of the season, with four running John Kerry's playing "a coast conversation with America."

Seven states and 269 pledged delegates are up for grabs in voting by the Feb. 7 caucuses in the Democratic party's nomination to challenge President George W. Bush in November's presidential election, a candidate needs no more than 2,162 delegates.

Kerry holds a substantial lead in polls in five of the states — Arizona, Delaware, Missouri, New Mexico, North Dakota — and a competitive in the other two — Oklahoma and South Carolina. His hope is a big win on Tuesday night that likely would secure the field.

Howard Dean, the former front-runner, continued to remind voters that the Democratic party's special interests, saying those links can double on the Massachusetts senator's claim to be the champion of the broader against those interests.

"My strategy against himself, people representing himself, as a candidate who might take on special interests in Washington," the former Vermont governor said.

"My second response is this," Kerry, a senator from Massachusetts, replied to reporters during a stop in Fargo, North Dakota, where he took in the Super Bowl before flying to New Mexico. "I have fought powerful special interests every day of this war."

Meanwhile, Kerry was continuing to pick up big name endorsements, winning the backing of the United Farm Workers union and Washington Gov. Gary Locke, aides said. The union's backing would give Kerry crucial support among Hispanics who are a key constituency in New Mexico and Arizona.

Washington state holds caucuses on Saturday, and Kerry plans to head there and most others on Tuesday night, shifting his focus to the next area.

Retired Gen. Wesley Clark focused on Oklahoma, where polls show he has the best shot at pulling off a badly needed win on Tuesday night. He was joined by Mike McClure, who as a 22-year-old private pulled Clark out of gunfire and protected him during a Vietnam firefight. "Mike, you saved my life," Clark said, drawing his head to an Oklahoma rally.

Kerry held a similar session with his Democratic, a Special Forces officer Kerry rescued in Vietnam.

North Carolina Sen. John Edwards was focused on South Carolina, where polls gave him the best chance of scoring a victory. He dismissed suggestions he could put Kerry to a running mate.

"I think you should ask Senator Kerry whether he's interested in being vice presidential," said Edwards, his voice growing hoarse. "You can see I've been talking too much," he added.

Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman touted the endorsements of newspapers in Seattle and South Carolina. "What this says is I have national support," he said.

The seven states holding primaries or caucuses Tuesday together represent more than 12 percent of the 2,162 delegates needed to claim the Democratic nomination.

Kerry's Front Monday was on New Mexico and Arizona, completing a one-week blitz of the seven states currently in play. Polls show him well ahead in both states, but surveys around the country detect a huge group of undecided voters, close by large enough to sway the outcome. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

'Spirit' healthy again

LOS ANGELES — Spirit, Mars rover Spirit woke up and running again on Sunday for the first time since the computer communications problems 10 days ago, and just a day after its twin Opportunity rebounded to outlast the other side of the planet. Both Spirit declared "healthy" again. Mars said it was the first time in history that two mobile robotic units exploring the surface of another planet at the same time. Reuters

Crowd foils arrest

BOGOTA — About 100 opposition-party members foiled the attempted arrest and seizure of riot police in an attempt to jail the wife of former President Ernesto Samper on charges she took illegal campaign contributions, a party official said. Prosecutors alleged that Nohra Puyana, a lawmaker from the opposition Liberal Party, received $500,000 in illegal election funds in 1982 from drug cartels such as Cali. Police officials said they had to use tear gas to disperse the crowd, which had surrounded the police vehicle. AP

Guilty of snake mail

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — An Arkansas lawyer said he was still on trial for beating his wife after pleading guilty to mailing a threatening venomous snake to a prosecutor's aide. Bob Lee Cordeiro, an attorney and former city judge in Pocahontas, Arkansas, sent his ex-wife, Anne, some dumped with a rattling venomous snake in a package addressed to a prosecutor's aide. The box attached guilty to federal mail and harassment. The aide of the man in the box opened the package and found the snake and ran the snake, about 20 inches long, out of the box. Police soon arrived on the scene in Pocahontas, about 140 miles northeast of Little Rock, and shot the snake dead. The 49-year-old Cordeiro faces between 27 months and 33 months in prison, while his co-accused younger sister of between 21 months to 44 months on the same charges because of a previous conviction. A sentencing date has not been set. Reuters

'Hello Kitty' turns 30

TOKYO — Fans of Japan's ubiquitous "Hello Kitty" character can already buy anything from cars to computers to kimonos adorned with the innocent cat's face. But 30 of the smallest admirers of the popular puss have an opportunity to get their paws on something a little more exclusive. An avid Diana stalker per $820,000, they can buy a dress on high-fashion Hello, the dress and hair ribbon studded with 733 diamonds. Tokyo jeweler Tanaka Kikinzoku Jewelry is offering a limited edition of 30 of the distinctive figurines from Monday to celebrate the cat's 30th anniversary. If the jewelry's priced famous all. Reuters

INQUIRER

OPINION

Publisher Isaac Tanco
Editor-in-Chief Letty Jimena Magsanoc
Managing Editor Joe Ma. D. Nolasco
Associate Editor Alexander G. Adalem
News Editors Dennis T. Trinidad Jr. • Chief News Desk Jose Rick Flavier
Opinion Editor Joaquin V. Arcilla
Features Editor Philostrene B. Bandiola Jr.
City Editor Grace Lee
Design Desk Editor Roland A. Caballero
Editorial Consultant Amando Doronila
Chief Photographer Oscar E. Zamboanga
Art & Design Director Lisabel A. Villareal

Board Chairman Isaac R. Tanco
President Alexander Pedro Rodriguez
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Rosario R. Tanco
Senior Vice President for Corporate Services Sarah G. Tanco
VP for Advertising Juan R. Cuasay
Art Director Gloria P. Lacsamana

All rights reserved. Except as provided by law, no part of the Philippine Daily Inquirer may be reproduced or distributed in any form without prior written consent from the publisher or copyright holder.

Journalistic truth

MORE than two thousand years ago, Pontius Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Up to now the question has not been satisfactorily answered.

The nature of truth was one of the topics discussed during the recent Media Nation summit at Clark in Pampanga. Journalistic truth is a very elusive concept. At the first instance, the "truth" as contained in news reports is filtered through the reporter's biases, perceptions, **EDITORIAL** odious, attitudes, cultural background, etc. At the second instance, it is filtered through the editors' biases, prejudices, attitudes, cultural background, etc.

Because of these "filters," a journalist cannot report the perfect, ideal "truth." Yes, perhaps he could if he were reporting a mathematical equation: 2+2=4. But even certain scientific and mathematical "truths" are undergoing change.

For instance, we learned from Euclidean geometry that two parallel lines will never meet. But some physicists say that if two parallel lines are extended to the farthest reaches of the universe (assuming that the universe is flat), they will eventually meet because of the curvature of space. Some scientists said last year that we may be inhabiting a dodecahedral cosmos, something like a football, where space is curved upon itself.

Scientists can always prove their theories with physical evidence. But journalists can only try to give their audiences or readers an approximation of the truth. It would be best, of course, if they could present documentary proof to support the assertions in their stories. Some files, some records of some sort. (But now even these may not be 100 percent reliable and food proof, as shown recently by what happened at the National Archives.) Or journalists could get some reliable, credible news source to speak on the record.

In some instances, journalists can present several versions of the "truth," the way Rizzo was described in "Shakespeare," a film about a lonely, ugly and hot husband. He presented four versions of the "truth" and left it to the audience to decide which was the "real" truth.

In most stories involving conflict, such as political stories, journalists present both sides of a story or an issue, if there are two sides. They present all sides if there are more than two sides to a story or an issue.

Journalists can also give their readers and audience a better approximation of the truth by taking an in-depth, analytical and interpretive approach to the news. Very often, a news story has to be put in context to give the reader or the audience the complete picture. Sometimes, the omission of some details or the failure to include one or two facts can give the reader or audience a false picture of a news development.

But to be able to report the news accurately, objectively and fairly, journalists have to have professional and ethical competence. A US journalism institute sums this up succinctly with a pyramid of journalistic competencies. At the base of the pyramid are news judgment, narrative and language, analysis and interpretation and reporting skills. On the upper second tier are visual literacy, technological competence and numeracy. On the third tier are cultural and civic competencies.

At the apex of the pyramid is ethical competence. Ethical competence is considered the most important competency of a journalist. This is because a journalist may be an excellent writer, a good reporter, a good investigator and he may have the best educational and cultural background, but without ethical competence, he is nothing.

The ethical journalist is clear in his guiding principles and strong in his values, committed to serve the public good, courageous in his beliefs and independent in his thinking.

As mentioned, journalist cannot be relied upon to always report the truth. Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel in "The Elements of Journalism" said, "Journalism's first obligation is to the truth." And Jack Fuller, president of the company that publishes the Chicago Tribune, said that "the central purpose of journalism is to tell the truth so that people will have the information that they need to be sovereign." Journalists always have to be reminded that they are in the business of reporting the truth.

It is well that the leaders of the print and electronic media who gathered at the Media Nation summit discussed the need to improve the professional and ethical competence of journalists. The media exercises a great influence on society but this influence can be for good or for bad. To be able to wield its influence for good, the media has to constantly train and educate itself and occasionally pause from its hectic schedule to engage in self-examination.

True or paranoia: Inside the mind of Erap

LAST weekend, a group of journalists was ushered to interviews inside Freedom Boards at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal. It is situated up in lush mountain jungle, and a palace of the same color Hyland is not dark nor although he had just six weeks.

Somebody commented that he had a healthy color like and in the very pale.

"Hanapan sa sun," Erap replied.

Freedom is little darker," somebody said.

"I look nice in dark as during Bermuda," he cited.

Everybody looked as columnist Jonathan Jake Cruz and Malaya's Jarius were hardly recognizable.

"Tumaba kayo," another journalist wondered.

"Sun, maraming kumain dito," he replied.

Erap said world-class cuisine when he refused because of his diabetes' limits and somebody asked where he would go abroad for his operation.

He said he had grown up on his mama Asturias cuisine because never been in the province as much and a big fan his time. He was changing P1-2 million, whereas Stanford University Hospital in Palo Alto, California, where the doctor practices, would cost him exorbitant replacement to an hospital still cost only $600,000 maximum. So, the disease is changing him double.

"Dinanggal ako ng diabetes," he said.

Erap said he is talking with another surgeon, Dr. Christopher Andres of Lotus Linda Hospital, also in California, who is charging him only $50,000, including medicines. Erap said he is considering this one because of a new policy initiated since the Mark of Iraq was hospitalized at Hospital which attracted a dishonest and international controversy denying visas to former heads of state with pending cases in their home countries. Erap said his visa denial is still under appeal and that the Department of Foreign Affairs is giving strings to the US State Department to get him a visa.

"Versus the administration really wants you

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

one of this country," somebody asked.

If this fails, Erap said he will have his operation either in Singapore or Switzerland.

Asked about reports that President Macapagal-Arroyo may negotiate with Moros from the mine's head from for the latter to settle down from the presidential race in her favor, Erap replied that this must help him. They have the same view, he added.

"Were always PFI and Ping Lacson? Won't Ping withdraw in favor of PFI?"

Erap said the one-on-one meeting between the two opposition candidates may take place in March or April, if not earlier.

"Isa't isa tayo," he said.

Who About Standing Campaign agreed to withdraw in no favor if you don't be late."

"Why did Standing agree to withdraw?"

"He had no organization then. That's the same problem now of Ping."

On the survey SWS survey somebody commented that PFI is not as popular now as Erap was at the same stage of his campaign. Erap replied that PFI started very late. He said he, Erap, started campaigning very while he was still in detention, accepting speaking engagements right and left.

Asked about PFI's flashes of temper, he commented that PFI is still new in the political game. He said he is not used to the rough and tumble of politics. "Erap said, "I campaigned for 16 years. I'm not new, he is only the Cory at the moves, he doesn't talk much, is not out of the scene."

Indeed, she sees some friends are really opponents. For all the consolation she is doing, Erap is still cheerful, always cracking jokes. But PFI has no sense of humor, can't even tell a joke nor smile often, though he can laugh heartily at jokes told to others.

When can they address him now?

"Don't raise your weapon. Ang weapon ask Ateneo the candidates. There's politics. Be prepared for cyberspace. That's life.

"But he will learn, like to tell what Gore has done. No, I had enough time. I was also new to in the beginning. It is a big jump from being talented to be a senator, and then being governor, involved in politics. But I learned what I was meant to their interests and then was president. PFI will also learn. Isa pa tayo sa hula noon."

What about his knowledge?

"PFI is aware Filipinos down there have ties to Makati," Erap replied.

The mention of Makati touched off a top secret in the disposed President. He mentioned the Makati Business Club of conspiring to depose him.

"Why would they do that?

"Because I didn't give in to their wishes," Erap said. He said also after the Asian economic crisis, and the peso exchange rate against the dollar shot up, the banks and the lenders, the rest are, not connected more for Metro Manila, asked him to increase the water rates because they were losing down there getting the dollar down instead home.

He said those are your bids. It's hardly five months and you already want rates increase? What will the people say? Besides, she contacts him any rate increase for the next years.

Meralco Lucio Tan was his son-in-law in the Court of Appeals, they wanted rate not to appeal to the Supreme Court. But what will be the people think?," said. They will think I let them down to favor a friend. I promised the people nothing, kumain, nothing happen. So my appointment of Tan was my biggest contribution.

Why not Cardinal Sin, he wanted him to drop the population control program. But Sin will never get out of the grocery was if we don't control the population explosion. So it turned him down.

As they all gorged up on rice—the dishes, the Lapidez, Lapu-Lapu, Tilapia, the Tapsilog, Gimo, GMA—and I am a prisoner."

"Jose, is just the cravings of a pregnant?

Postscript to a coup

BEFORE THE DAGE just fades away, the old soldiers, a friend's dear put to rest rules?

For biased people express incredulity or as their skepticism, what is their objection to Dado Tiro, a GMA-tire supporter under the AFP to restore the appearance of the other candidates? and two, how near the AFP possible do this?

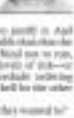
Three objections are not unreasonable.

Dado Tiro, a GMA-tire supporter, used in the past for electioneering purposes, largely in providing financial and logistical support for the party in power. It's a major cook-out to win some discretionary funds providing with to some discretionary funds providing with to think you're considering particularly to think you're and another. So it's also a major cook-out to win promotion and commissioners, and can be used to hand people to rallies. The comparison you a role more obvious. It has the biggest number of planes and helicopters, there are number of soldiers and officers, and the annual funding aid is good to access to thought-to-close colleges in the close planes.

Senator Ilocos and Jose de Venecia supported these privileges in 1992 and 1998. It didn't help, of course, they love the dictator. He, more than them, does not control.

They fear is no surprise for GMA to up the ante. She has run back to some pace at the risk to save. She is widely seen as a coup, someone who comes in close to power to sell out, a line of defense, a political dividend pay. Indeed, she has mentioned Marcos and De Venecia's levels of unpopularity. The public severely discounted Marcos and De Venecia, it pointedly declines GMA. There is evidence to date in the surveys but in the upcoming levels of campaign to date the favored money from the public, quite apart from the AFP. But it is the reason she hasn't been able to act as zealous.

GMA's second assurance shows she is not keen to be reckless, or take huge gambles. She appointed the officers she was confident of, anticipating the scope of the war in Mindanao by bringing the AFP among the enemy behind. If the Balkanized institutions are to be believed, by engineering, along with Angelo Reyes, the



THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiroz

bombings of several places to justify it. And you can't but see the biggest gambler of them all, the one who has the guts of four Rizal not to run, and not scared. There are levels of risk—or desperation—that do not preclude utilizing external pressure to make life hell for the other candidates.

Cardinal generals do that if they wanted to?

No.

Even in as more liberal sense, it is probably possible for them to restrict the movements of the other candidates to areas presumed to be favorable to administration candidates. They can hinder many parts of Luzon and the several Mindoro Airplanes. The coup could be easily suspended. The conditions could be presented from going to those places on grounds of threats to their safety. They have the power of verifying it. Since GMA presumed George H. Bush's favorite was the extension of threats that created safety on the AFP Peninsulas soldiers, or some, or assessments, could even be investigated to sabotage the rallies of the other candidates, the Cardinal Sin being put on orders and harassed. Beyond the limited areas, 10000-party consult is to try unprecedented logistical support.

How, we come to the crux of the matter, the one thing that makes all the believable. That is that Executive Justice, the defense chief, is also Executive Justice, the defense chief, is also GMA's campaign strategist. Ermita, of course, has testified in Senate's charge, but his presence subverts his presentations. You cannot have a bigger anomaly than that the defense secretary is also the political strategist of the incumbent. In comparison with AFP and questions is from being a neutral endorser of ground rules. In fact the one-on organization is the disposal of Cabinet, or specifically GMA. And with GMA being a very basic shark, it makes complaining a lot dicey as to a more basic, if not an invisible, purpose.

The secret of why an Ermita officials disobey the regulations, Ermita and Hector Abaya, the AFP chief, say they are guilty of frustrating a coup is more by similar to Cabernet, and what Cope behind them, they become having at the head of it.

Was the coup? Boy Abaya may say, and disagree things, but he is a choice only to himself. There are no coup newspapers, there are no military gatherings, there are—most importantly—no rumors of a coup or mutiny. The last is the country's biggest coup plot was in the days of the coup, which called the "Christmas coup," a coup that is advertised well in Switzerland but which nobody wants able to coup.

Why no talk would Cope, the presumed mastermind of the destabilization plot, would remove GMA by forcible means? The legal one is readily available—resignation. Any one of GMA's rivals stands to win over her, and Cope's boss, Peping Cojuangco, has expressed a preference for PFI, narrowly the strongest bet. If Cope's boss, Peping Cojuangco, has expressed a preference for PFI, narrowly the strongest bet. If GMA's rivals stands to win over her, and Cope's boss, Peping Cojuangco, has expressed a preference for PFI, narrowly the strongest bet. If GMA, it would have done it last year, not today. Not in the thick of the country's favorite season when a lose in chances to succeed or participate supports it as dud. The junior officers may be GMA's men, but they would always change, but they are not the defaulted.

There is only one way to dispel Ermita's perfectly believable charge that GMA means to use the AFP to cheat, and I have no doubt. That is for the Commander-in-Chief to tell the military or a GMA's campaign strategist. He may not be both at the same time. And to order the officers and men of the AFP loudly enough for the world to hear, under the severest sanctions if it is not obeyed, to desist from taking sides in the election. That is the duty of the Commander-in-Chief, and not even the elections will guarantee it.

Ermita doesn't do that and GMA "wins," by will be the last rites cried well. No one will believe that it was the work of the AFP.

Major league players

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassayan

SENATE President Franklin Drilon called up yesterday with Malacañang power to impose in various media, including the cultural, that symbol to pay-TV his chairing to observing the House's leadership to reduce the internal budget by P60 billion. Speaker Jose de Venecia had earlier been quoted as saying that the House pocket set to pass the proposed 2004 budget of P963 billion, and instead just against last year's P903 billion. But in order to earn P60 billion and save a basic ration in the second semester of this year, Drilon pointed out that as the first place the House was the one that approved the P963-billion budget proposed by Malacañang and not the P903 billion budget of 2003. Drilon said the extra P60 million push barrel allocations for each senator would not be released automatically, cully under the old budget, unlike in the previous. Drilon stressed that the total allocation for P2 senators is far below that of the 220 House members of P78 million each.

• • •

The senate chief then asserted that his chamber was ready to accept the challenge of the House and is agreeable to cutting the budget below the new budget. But if the Senate is amenable to Drilon's reduction, why not just pass the old budget? Drilon said there are many to do, 2004 budget that pertains to "new projects," such as those addressing calamities.

• • •

Both sides have strong arguments, but it is known there is seriously reduce the budget to avert a deficit that could balloon to over P220 billion this year. Drilon's just-released figures, coupled with a lot of assessments and statistics, and they have only until July 8, when Congress adjourns.

• • •

Two months ago, when Estrada was 21 shares but has not the political deep to [illegible] the senatorial bravery. I opined that things would polarize and some candidacy would be strengthened. Over the weeks, as the Estrada papal administration went all out with GMA's re-electionists, such as the use of the AFP and police, the support of non-entities had supports, and various party alliances programs, but nothing improved. The congenials since was the recognition of Sen. Noli de Castro as GMA's running-mate. The latest survey of Social Weather Stations (SWS) showing those to range between leaning behind Fred Lim or a respectable 10 percent. But no longer marching with Osmeña, and Pimentel to Lacson in the bottom. Analysts point out other than Fred Lim, Noli de Castro is the only candidate who has been both visible and known to enjoy a big name for a reasonable and to fill the 12 slots of his senatorial lineup, which is composed mainly of his name. When Noli received Senator Ingata, I wrote that possible [illegible] would guarantee his senatorial campaign. Suggestions are now coming from various quarters for him to consider stepping down in GMA's favor, so that she could beat FPJ.

• • •

Actually, perhaps TDC has no that would put

Kindergarten ethics

YOUNG BLOOD

Eugene Quintin J. Bichara

VAWC is a development problem, too

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

About Bicol (1)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Alexis C. Sherper

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

What ails the broadcast media?

I AGREE in congratulating Mr. Renee U. Jurilla for noticing "Beyond Willie Revillame." (PDI, 2/2/04, P6) Now, I thank God that Revillame is hopefully banished from our basic primetime shows, if not from the entertainment world altogether. Inevitably, I'm happy that the management of ABS-CBN finally found the guts to act him. However, what about his other co-hosts like Randy Santiago, Bayani Agbayani and the rest of KTB's insensitive crew? Will ABS-CBN continue to inflict these incorrigible individuals on our young people?

Regarding the "Expose" feature (Chance ni 7), I would like to ask this question: How long will you tolerate the gender insensitive acts of Bayani Agbayani, Joey de Leon and Vic Sotto? Over the years, I've followed up the shows of these two people and so far as I know, the only contribution they've made to the entertainment world is to peddle dirty jokes and insult the sensitivity of the audience and their female guests, in particular.

My "beef" is current: "Revillame is only a symptom of a more grave TV malaise that has stricken some other local TV people ... that has led to the lowering of program standards, the "ridiculousness" of local television, and the deplorable state of late night, adult TV, gander on the dentists, 'GF' mas ako." Allow us to blame for all these? The gender roles and TV routines, the stands Exposition ng mga Broadcasters ng Pilipinas, and last but not the least, the Filipino audiences itself that continues to patronize the silliest and sometimes lascivious shows like Eat Bulaga, Tropang Bayan and Sic Bulagan.

—CARLOS D. ERLES, 12 Marimona St., Fillwood 1, Bahay ni Hilda, Quezon City

New vs Old Testament?

I AM writing in reaction to the column, "Valley of Death," of Conrado de Quiros, which appeared on the Jan. 23 issue of the Inquirer.

The New Testament has never been believed superior to the Old in any teachings because it is the same God who required the warnings of both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus stressed, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. But assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18). And He adds, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Both the Law and the Prophets always refer to the Old Testament writings. Here can De Quiros say that the New is superior to the Old when even Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the Old and that His words will by no means pass away?

De Quiros's verses about "the concept of an eye for an eye, which Abraham and the other patriarchs propagated," allowing more insight this: I dare challenge De Quiros to tell us where in the Bible does it say that Abraham taught "the concept of an eye for an eye."

He also said "How was it that the reading of the evil signified." The meaning of the evil that separates the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place signified that all God's children, not only the high priest, can now directly come before the throne of God. I don't see how he can construe "the concept of an eye for an eye" with the sending of the evil. We cannot simply interpret the Scripture anyway we like it.

I also don't know how De Quiros could say that the old were strict on usage binding when Jesus Himself taught that "whoever breaks the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Furthermore, Jesus did not preach a new and kinder world. He preached repentance "for the kingdom of God is at hand."

The Bible is clear in its teaching on keeping what is said. "He who belongs a man and walks him, or else is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death" (Exodus 21:16). God said, "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal. Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39). Jesus Himself said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28).

—EVELYN SILVERIO, chelvisamag_mike@yahoo.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the operations of rates and please file the dispatch, use your letter to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Dasmariñas Street, corner Ilaya and Muralla Streets, City of Manila or send a fax to this: 897-4785, 897-4790 or e-mail: customer@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS

Leading the country different from heading a firm

I REFER to disagree with Roberto M. Ancon (PDI, 2/2/04) who said that the position of the president of the Republic of the Philippines "is just like the position or a manager or president of a corporation or organization."

In a business corporation, authority flows from the top, while in government, authority emanates from the people through the mandate of institution. The power of the manager or a corporation president is acquired through performance and merit, while the president of our government acquires his power through popular vote. In business corporations, those at the top must be the best although not the most popular to get elected, the president may not be necessarily the best, or even academically equipped, but he must be the most popular (which is Philippine politics today).

The manager or president of a business corporation issues an order, which goes down the line for compliance. Anyone who doesn't follow risks his job.

The president of the Philippines may issue an order, which the Senate and the House does not discuss and input till their members raise blue ribbons or are deadlocked, the Supreme Court intervenes.

Indeed, the position of Philippine president is vastly different from that of a manager or president of a business corporation.

—OLIVER B. OLLES, ALL-TECH at SIBE, Cagayan de oro City

Careless insensitivity

"ARRAGO ruling alarms foreign investors," by Bernie M. Bontigao, (PDI, 1/31/04) betrays careless insensitivity on the part of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP).

The Supreme Court interventions, ECCP says, undermine investor confidence and investor (energy supply) when a recent issuance of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) authorizing Meralco to effect a rate increase of P0.22 per kilowatt-hour starting Jan. 1, 2004.

This charge is totally uncalled for. First, the Supreme Court is empowered under the Constitution as well as under law and jurisprudence to review ERC orders. Second, the Supreme Court acted on the petitions of "civic advocacy groups" led by President Pepe Tesoro Cojuangco alleging that (1) the proceeds of the P51.12 rate hike would be used by Meralco as additional capital and, therefore, should have been collected from its shareholders, not from power consumers, (2) the ERC authorized Meralco to take its rate rebate at San Miguel began to comply with the Supreme Court order to refund to power consumers the P2.9 billion it has overcharged them, and (3) the ERC authorized Meralco to take its rate rebate because the Supreme Court's ruling would be "prejudiced." Ben Ellenard Gandara, the ERC chair who gave Meralco the go-signal to collect the P0.22 rate increase, was a politician. In fact, after granting Meralco the multibillion-peso favor, he resigned to run for congressman. And he lost; it so, despite the ECCP's outlandish plea, Sandoval's replacement is also a politician.

But the ECCP's real target is to eliminate the Supreme Court from what is calls the "energy regulatory environment." This will require a constitutional amendment. But will the globalization-oppressed Filipino people agree or do the profit-driven traders eliminate the wars?

—ANDRICO GAT INOCENCIO, Unit 1001 Union Square Condominium, 540 EMS Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City

Not even a joke or a movie

ONE may remind ... two may hold ... "The Philippines is inevitably going to sink deeper and deeper into the muck, obviously. But who's to blame except the Filipinos themselves, the stupid people who the likes of Ramon Revilla, Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto, Bong Revilla, Lito Lapid, Jinggoy Estrada, Loi Ejercito, Dick Gordon, Mike Defensor, Mar Roxas, Noynoy Aquino, Kiko Pangilinan, Manny Villar, Ralph Recto and the like. Do you remember anything these people have done for you? How are have scoundrels like Bong Revilla, Lito Lapid, Jinggoy Estrada, Mike Defensor, Dick Gordon

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonio

GenSan folk warned vs 'GMA project'

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The city government has warned residents here against an alleged bogus housing project of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ramon Bermido, head of the City Housing and Land Management Office (CHLMO) of this city, said the project being undertaken by the Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP) for low-income families with no office or no low-cost housing project.

CUP will be financed in the Community Mortgage Program (CMP) originated, plans to put up a housing project dubbed "Dream Workers Village" in Barangay Dadiangas.

The project is allegedly favored by the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC), the government agency mandated to implement CMP projects pursuant to Republic Act 7279 or the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA).

But NHMFC president Angelito Ireland issued a statement saying the NHMFC has neither accredited nor transacted with the CUP.

In a statement Jan. 29, Ireland warned the public not to transact with CUP to avoid being bilked.

Records said his office has been receiving complaints from the public regarding the alleged dubious investment schemes of CUP.

This, he said, prompted Director Tupaz, who claims to be an adviser to some officers of ILP here, said CUP is a legitimate organization and the project is part of the low-cost housing project of the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Special Concerns.

He identified a certain Rolando Bautista as coordinator for telephones of the project.

Tupaz said aside from General Santos, CUP also has a CMP project in Tigaman, Digos City in Davao del Sur.

He said they have been receiving applications from qualified beneficiaries but they have not yet collected any amount as fees.

When asked why the implementation of the project was not properly coordinated with the NHMFC and the city government, Tupaz said "just contact Mr. Bautista because he is in the right position to speak about the project."

Tupaz said the project has the blessings of Senator-elect Aquilino C. Pimentel, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

No work in Bulacan today

ITS A special non-working day in Bulacan today. President Macapagal-Arroyo issued Proclamation No. 320 declaring Feb. 3 of every year a special non-working day in the province. The proclamation, according to a press release from the Malacañang Media Affairs Office, was issued by the President in response to the province's 100th anniversary celebration. Governor Josefina dela Cruz, in a letter to the President, said the proclamation will provide the residents with the opportunity to participate in the festivities. Bulacan was created by virtue of Act No. 1697 of the Philippine Commission on Feb. 3, 1901. Its capital is the city of Malolos. —Jeannette Andrade, PDI Bulacan Bureau

Mad man torches school

CEBU CITY—A deranged man torched San Pedro Calungsod Parish Elementary School in Barangay Tinago here on Monday, destroying a room and damaging the adjacent room. Police identified the suspect as Jose Bacon, 30, a resident of Barangay Tinago. Investigators said Bacon entered the school premises at around 1 a.m. and set fire to the room. Bacon was arrested by police after he was caught trying to escape from the school premises. Police said Bacon was drunk when he committed the crime. —Jhoanna Ballaran, PDI Visayan Bureau

3 NPA rebs yield

CEBU CITY—Two members of the New People's Army surrendered to the 79th Infantry Battalion (IB) based in Sagay, Cebu. Lt. Col. Rolando Mallorca, the battalion's 79th IB chief, declared the rebels by the last month aged 19 and 19 who recently surrendered to the military in Sagay City. Mallorca said the rebels, who were members of the Vicente Pinalpar Command operating in Cebu province, decided to surrender allegedly due to hardship and lack of food while still in the rebel movement. —Jhoanna Ballaran, PDI Visayan Bureau

Reforestation project

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Negros Occidental provincial government will implement this year a multi-million peso reforestation project to be funded locally. Gov. George Hofer said in a recent meeting with the governor that the provincial government would allocate some P12.5 million for the project and will focus its plan to plant coconut, fruits and the Ingedino, caused by forest destruction should inspire the local officials to join hands in taking care of forests. The governor explained that Negros Occidental has P9.25 million equity and distributes this to the cities and municipalities of the province. —Rony C. Amarado, PDI Visayan Bureau

Banana venture

DUMAGUETE CITY—The provincial government of Negros Oriental wants to become a major producer of an export variety of banana that will be grown using modern technology. Provincial veterinarian Jerry Pellegrini said the provincial government want to initiate full commercialization of agricultural activities at the Central Visayas Polytechnic College (CVPC) located in this city by the production of tissue cultured seedlings of the 'lakatan' and 'saba' varieties. He said the CVPC has already produced around 3,000 would make to introduce students to seedling production activities. Pellegrini said the project will benefit personnel and faculty. —Rony C. Amarado, PDI Visayan Bureau

Erratum

THE PHOTO caption that appeared on page 11 (Monday, Feb. 2) attributed a wrong statement to Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile. The group said they heeded, instead criticized, as Senate majority floor leader and not Defense Secretary. The Inquirer regrets the error.

FLU TEST
A poultry worker in San Fernando, Pampanga holds a chicken to check if it has signs of being infected with the bird flu virus. The government has given assurances that bird flu has spared local poultry but, like this man, has an extensive way of finding out.
AFP/ NOEL CELIS

Chinoy trader kidnapped, rescued in Lanao town

COTABATO CITY—A group of armed men abducted a Chinese businessman from his residence in Marawi City on Monday morning but he was rescued by police in Lanao del Sur after a gunbattle with the kidnappers.

Police identified the victim as Dy Tiong Kee, 50, a resident of Barangay Dulay in Marawi City.

Police said Dy was abducted by seven armed men who barged into his residence at around 6:30 a.m. and forced him to board a van.

Police said the kidnappers were intercepted by a police team at a checkpoint in Barangay Bubong in Marawi City.

A gunbattle ensued between the police and the kidnappers, prompting the latter to abandon their victim and flee.

Police said Dy was unharmed when he was rescued.

Police said they are looking for the kidnappers.

Only 2 of 500 Maguindanao bets take drug tests

COTABATO CITY—Of the more than 500 candidates seeking local elective posts in Maguindanao, only two have undergone mandatory drug test results.

Provincial Election Supervisor Atty. Jose Tolentino said he has received the certificates of compliance from Governor Datu Andal Ampatuan Jr. and Vice Governor Datu Sakilan Mangudadatu.

Tolentino said he is expecting more candidates to undergo drug tests before the deadline on Feb. 15.

Tolentino said he has received the certificates of compliance from Governor Datu Andal Ampatuan Jr. and Vice Governor Datu Sakilan Mangudadatu.

Tolentino said he is expecting more candidates to undergo drug tests before the deadline on Feb. 15.

Comelec workers threaten to strike

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Officers and staff members of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in Western Mindanao have threatened to stage a one-day strike that would paralyze the May 10 elections if the poll officers' security is not improved.

Atty. Lourdes Comia, regional director, said the Comelec officials in the region received death threats from unidentified persons.

"They [Comelec officials] have to be escorted by armed men every time they go out," Comia said.

Comia said the threats were made through text messages.

She said a few days ago, Comelec officials in Basilan province received three anonymous letters that would have affected the annual poll exercise," Flores added

Cebu jeepney drivers demand ₱1.50 fare hike

By Ramona Magallanes
INQ Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Two transport groups here are pushing for a ₱1.50-increase in minimum fares for passenger jeepneys to offset the series of oil price adjustments.

Casimiro Olegario, adviser of the Alyansa ng mga Maghahatsuna Demokratiko-Operator Ating sa Inyarnos (Andar), said his group planned to file its petition for a fare increase before the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) next week.

The Southern Cebu Operators and Drivers Association Inc. (SODAI), whose members ran mostly its southern Cebu routes, will join the petition.

Andar is composed of 13 transport organizations with 3,000 members operating in Cebu, Talisay and Mandaue cities.

The SODAI, on the other hand, is composed of four transport organizations and has 1,000 members in Minglanilla, Naga, San Fernando, Carcar and Talisay towns.

Mayuta said the two groups would no longer ask an increase in the succeeding kilometers, if granted, the LTFRB has imposed a ₱0.50 add-on rate for every succeeding kilometer.

Mayuta asked the public to understand the groups plea for a fare adjustment because the drivers could no longer absorb the increase in descriptions.

Since the ₱4 minimum fare was granted by the LTFRB in 2001, the total increase in the price of diesel has totalled ₱4 per liter, according to Mayuta.

In 2001, the price of diesel was ₱14 per liter. Now, diesel is retailed at more than ₱18, he said.

Aside from the oil price increases, Mayuta said drivers and operators had to contend with high prices of spare parts.

Andar had filed a petition for fare hike in 2002 but it was denied by the LTFRB main office in Manila.

The board usually decides in favor of the commuters. "And we hope this time to get a decision on our side," Mayuta said.

Foreign investors dump RP stocks

From page A1

tial candidates Fernando Poe Jr. for representing militant to topple President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Those who are closely following had earlier considered the resignation of Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita and downsized value they said were attempts by the administration to use soldiers to influence the outcome of the election.

Concern about military unrest helped underwrite the peso for week as it fell to a record low of $1:₱56 against the dollar.

Further weighing on sentiment was a downgrade by Moody's Investors Service in the country's credit rating.

"Basically, the litany of woes over the past few days continued to underlie today's performance. The investors are uncomfortable with the leading presidential candidates" Del Castillo said.

Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Pelaez said the sharp decline in share prices was partly due to politics.

He said businessmen should convince former Sen. Raul Roco to drop his bid for the presidency to enable the incumbent Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to win the election and pick a running mate from the administration coalition.

Pelaez also said the regional market was adversely being affected by El Federal Reserve chief Alan Greenspan's hints that the monetary authority is now to temper the ongoing global economic rebound.

Reyes says the market's new support level at 1,480. "The bearish sentiment will likely persist," he said.

Profit taking

Lorel brokerage ATR-Kim Eng securities believed that investors opted to take profit yesterday as the market continued to lead to the various local Weather Stations.

"The actions generated unorganized and lack of presidential leadership started to sink among market players particularly foreign institutions, which either pulled little attention to local developments," ATR-Kim Eng said in its daily report.

Other big losers yesterday were Ayala Corp., which shed 0.84 pelcent to ₱5.50, and Bank of the Philippine Islands, down 1 percent to ₱48.50.

SM Prime Holdings Inc., the country's largest mall developer, closed 1.04 percent or 10 centavos lower at ₱9.60 in "B" shares as Robinsons Land's largest fund manager firm, San Miguel Corp., tabled an open to foreigners, lost 1.41 percent or ₱1 to ₱70.

More foreign borrowings

The country's huge budget deficit was among the factors that Moody's took into account when it downgraded the country's credit rating.

Maintaining power the qualified the Monetary Board's decision authorizing the government to undertake more foreign borrowings this year to pay off maturing debts and parry speculative attacks on the peso.

In a statement, Mr. Macapagal's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said it was "irresponsible" for critics to injure politics in the matter of public interest.

The MB, the policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, had approved the government's plan to borrow from abroad to fill up the shortfall in its foreign exchange financing requirement estimated at between $1.4 billion and $2 billion.

A source said the government was planning to raise at least $500 million through the issuance of a 10-year global bond.

The borrowing measure has triggered speculation that this coming would borrow overseas reddenly to raise money for the President's campaign.

"The undeniably given by the MB is aimed at cushioning the effects of escalating foreign debt service costs created by fears on the political front which prompted the withdrawal of programmed local offerings due to rising spreads.

The MB's green light should give the government the leeway to tap the foreign debt market anytime to raise its financing requirements for the entire year before the elections.

Bunye said the government invested additional funds not only to cover debt servicing cost but also to sustain vital economic and social programs. With reports from Reuters and Jeff C. Gabaconguen.D.

Gas prices increased anew by 80¢/liter

From page A1

and translated to ₱1.30 per liter.

"Regional prices have gone up by about 80 per barrel of kerosene, gasoline and automotive diesel," Montoya said.

Asked whether this meant another round of price increases this month, Montoya said that would depend on how prices would go for the rest of the month.

₱21.30 per liter

Based on government records, the latest price adjustments raised the gasoline prices of Esso, and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. to between ₱21.80 and ₱21.30 per liter; those of Petron between ₱20.90 and ₱19.50; and kerosene between ₱17.75 and ₱16.30.

Both Caltex and Flying V reduced their imports from suppliers to buy from domestic bulk suppliers.

Data from the Department of Energy show that the Mean of Platts Singapore (Mops)—the benchmark for prices of finished products in the region—rates for gasoline went up by ₱0.69 to ₱44.28 per barrel in January from ₱39.13 last December.

Average Mops prices for diesel went up by ₱4.72 to ₱41.42 per barrel in January from ₱36.74 the previous month.

Of the same time, average Dubai crude prices went up by ₱0.77 to ₱28.47 per barrel in January from ₱28.10 last December.

The price increases by 31 centavos for an average of ₱55.51 for the dollar in January from ₱55.45 the month before.

Last month, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said the increases in oil prices were temporary and were partly due to the excessively high prices being maintained by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec).

Perez reiterated this in a talk with reporters last week, adding that the trend was also brought about by the seasonal increase in demand for the winter months.

He had said Opec was not following its self-imposed rule that it should move to temper rising prices by matching daily production by 800,000 barrels a day and when crude prices tested above $28 a barrel for more than 20 days.

"Keeping prices above $35 would invariably work against Opec," Perez said.

LINDA Montayre (center), chair of the People's Coordinators Assembly Koalisyon, is shown in this video being given TV time in other group's press conference to explain the "no election" scenario.

Montayre surfaces, also calls for 'No-el'

From page A1

spot to call for a "no election" in May.

She claimed that the president, her candidate, who is supposedly to win in a clean election, would be cheated by Malacañang to enable President Macapagal-Arroyo to win in power.

So, Montayre said, it would be better not to hold the elections and just form a government supported by the people.

"First thing is already in place, it's just a matter of implementing it," she said.

She explained that the president, her candidate, who is supposedly to win in a clean election, would be cheated by Malacañang to enable President Macapagal-Arroyo to win in power.

So, Montayre said, it would be better not to hold the elections and just form a government supported by the people.

"First thing is already in place, it's just a matter of implementing it," she said.

She explained that the president, her candidate, who is supposedly to win in a clean election, would be cheated by Malacañang to enable President Macapagal-Arroyo to win in power.

So, Montayre said, it would be better not to hold the elections and just form a government supported by the people.

"First thing is already in place, it's just a matter of implementing it," she said.

The PCIJ was among the fifty-three that lodged install Mr. Macapagal in power, but it was one of the first to withdraw support from her because of alleged corruption in the administration.

In a press briefing in Quezon City, Montayre slammed himself from the group of Marcos, secretary general of the Council on Philippine Affairs, who is reportedly be charged with sedition for an alleged coup plot involving senior military officers belonging to the Eternal Filipino (Filipino Soldier).

But Montayre, one of the signatories to the Black Declaration 2000 was run by the Interior on Jan. 9, said the Eternal Filipino's allegation that the camp of Mr. Macapagal was ripe on her route to the presidential elections next year.

Retired commodore

Montayre was joined at the press briefing by businessmen Benjamin Ilatis, Boston de La Cruz and Flying V to Infrastructure P2,110.0 and P12.50 per liter.

Philippine Shell Inn with gasoline at between ₱22.80 and ₱23.20 per liter; diesel between ₱20.90 and ₱19.50; and kerosene between ₱17.75 and ₱16.30.

Both Caltex and Flying V re-stop imports from suppliers to buy from domestic bulk suppliers.

Data from the Department of Energy show that the Mean of Platts Singapore (Mops)—the benchmark for prices of finished products in the region—rates for gasoline went up by ₱0.69 to ₱44.28 per barrel in January from ₱39.13 last December.

Average Mops prices for diesel went up by ₱4.72 to ₱41.42 per barrel in January from ₱36.74 the previous month.

Of the same time, average Dubai crude prices went up by ₱0.77 to ₱28.47 per barrel in January from ₱28.10 last December.

The price increases by 31 centavos for an average of ₱55.51 for the dollar in January from ₱55.45 the month before.

Last month, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said the increases in oil prices were temporary and were partly due to the excessively high prices being maintained by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec).

Perez reiterated this in a talk with reporters last week, adding that the trend was also brought about by the seasonal increase in demand for the winter months.

He had said Opec was not following its self-imposed rule that it should move to temper rising prices by matching daily production by 800,000 barrels a day and when crude prices tested above $28 a barrel for more than 20 days.

"Keeping prices above $35 would invariably work against Opec," Perez said.

Girl in car crash survives on crackers

From page A1

finally," Steve Mabbot of the Arizona Department of Public Safety told Agence France Presse.

"The mother [apparently died from] was earlier in the accident," which took place 32 km north of the small city of Globe, when the car struck a tree and fell over an embankment, he said.

A policewoman was stunned to find the toddler, Angel Emery, lying next to the lifeless body of the 30-year-old Patricia Marie Emery. While in the vehicle that was several meters from the nearest road in the county of the state.

Conscious

The plucky tot was conscious and apparently aware of what had happened. Golden said, but was desperately in need of food and water after being separated from the vehicle that was lying on its side.

"When our highway patrol officers found her, she was really dehydrated and the first thing she asked for was water," he said, adding that the girl had eaten out the crackers that were in the car to stay alive.

She was immediately airlifted to the Maricopa Medical Center where she was being treated last Monday for dehydration and severe third-degree burns.

Strapped to seat

Police said the youngster appeared to have been strapped in to a seat in the back of the vehicle at the time of the accident, but that she crawled to her mother in the front seat after the crash.

The Arizona Republic newspaper quoted the dead woman's neighbor, Ronald Bacon, in saying that family members had reported the mother and child missing after they failed to return home last Wednesday.

"Her daughter was her whole life," Bacon said. "She was a very loving person."

AFP

METRO
Editor Alexander S. Stanley

3 convicted kidnappers get 6-month lease on life

By Marjorie Ortiz
and Lyqui del Puerto

A Pasig City Regional Trial Court judge has reset the sentencing date of three convicted kidnappers from Feb. 12 to Aug. 20.

Arthur Fungchiao, Arnold Lopez and Reynaldo Nandez were convicted for the 1998 kidnapping of Mandaluyong businessman Teodoro Garcia.

A fourth accused, Jun Moreno, is still at large.

In June 1998, Judge Pablo Roque of Pasig City RTC branch 70 sentenced to death the four men.

According to Maria Gracia Dulalia, executive assistant of the Free Legal Assistance Group, the court initially misunderstood the date of the conviction promulgation. The execution date was two months short of what was prescribed by law.

According to the amended order, the court must set the date of execution, pursuant to Republic Act 8177, amending Republic Act 7659, which provides that the death sentence shall be carried out not earlier than one year nor later than 18 months after the judgment has become finalized and executory."

Dulalia, lawyer of two of the convicted, pointed out to avoid the unintended "order [on November 4] by Bureau of Corrections officials pointed out to the initial discrepancy.

Dulalia said the wrong Bureau of Corrections officials had work and concluded wrong of the amended order because the date of the original and erroneous execution is coming.

Dionisio Santiago, BuCor head and Justice undersecretary, in turn wrote Judge Reyes about the date discrepancy.

"A memo spread at the New Bilibid Prisons last week, saying that the three convicts will be executed in February," Dulalia said in a phone interview.

She stressed the names counsel her clients to be "extremely worried."

Convicts Fungchiao, Lopez and Nandez were scheduled to die by lethal injection on Feb. 12.

The Supreme Court affirmed the lower court's death penalty decision on April 30, 2003.

In March 1994, the police arrested Fungchiao, Lopez and Nandez at the Ortigas Center in Pasig City.

The three men, along with Moreno, had just pulled up the restaurant, and were on their way back to the safehouse when passengers Moreno removed the subjects and dragged them to a shootout.

Moreno was able to flee. But the fugitive in-law, Garcia, successfully survived the exchange and emerged from the kidnappers' vehicle unharmed.

PNP report identifies 12 Metro 'hot spots'

By Christine Figueroa

VIOLENCE could erupt in 12 of the 17 cities and municipalities of Metro Manila's coming election time, the Philippine National Police warned yesterday.

Director Avelino Razon Jr., PNP director for operations, identified these areas as the cities of Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Manila, Pasay, Las Piñas, Pasig and Makati, and the municipalities of Taguig, Pateros, Muntinlupa and San Juan.

Hot spots

Razon named the "hot spots" following a joint command conference with the Commission on Elections, Armed Forces and the National Security Council at Camp Aguinaldo last week.

And Saturday, he said, units are watch-out list in Metro Manila after considering the intense political rivalry and the number of election-related violence in these areas during the 2001 elections.

"We're monitoring these areas to prevent violence," Razon told reporters.

In the provinces, areas are classified as hot spots based also on record of activities of the New People's Army.

'White area'

Razon said Metro Manila was a "white area" for the last elections, claiming that NPA activities in the metropolis were limited to raising funds and mass activists, unlike in provinces, where rebellion was prevalent.

But Razon pointed out that "it doesn't necessarily mean that there will be violence" in the areas otherwise identified as "election areas of concern."

The cost of elections, for instance, is more different in areas such as Mindanao.

Mayor Joey Marquez is no longer up against his enemies, known analysts in Metro Olivarez, who is now his political ally.

Having served three straight terms, the comedian-turned-politician will be seeking a congressional seat as opposed to her two Mayoral Security Advisers Rudy Ordoñez Olivarez, in the meantime, will be running for mayor against Marquez's old-tagged wife, Alvin Montero.

In Caloocan, the Asistios will be pitted against the reigning political dynasty of Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo, who toppled the Asistios in 1995.

Caloocan battle

Shaw he could no longer run for mayor, Malonzo will be running for congressman in the city's first district.

His former vice mayor, Oca Echiverri Malonzo, will be running against her husband Mayor Macario "Boy" Asistio Jr.

Asistio's younger brother, Luis, a running for congressman in the city's second district.

WITH the elections fast approaching, the police are tightening the watch at checkpoints like this one along Marcos Highway in Cainta, Rizal, to prevent violence and criminality in and around Metro Manila. JOAN BONDOC

MetroBriefs

Cops killed in crash

TWO LAPMAN, including the driver of Barbo's Police Mobile 2 director Chief Supt. Oscar Calderon, reportedly died when a police vehicle overturned shedding in Pasay City. PO1 Dionisio Ong, 29, and PO1 Wilson Arcilla, 30, were pronounced dead at Rizal Memorial Hospital. PO1 Ambrosio Cruz, another police, said PO1 Manuel Dimaano Ong was driving a Honda Civic (TAH 142) along C. Palanca St. when the car hit an abutment of the highway. Cruz said Ong fell unconscious. The accident occurred the other lanes and the driver of the E.A. Construction office.

Lyqui del Puerto

Mowers has 2 days

MOLES that Mowers his wife Cecilia, and four others in the Caloocan-Malabon business have until Tuesday to settle their debts before the National Bureau of Investigation, if they want to avoid the filing of charges against them. If the six received from the NBI summons, the bureau would have 5-PM the charges with the Department of Justice, as officials said. Underscore the Bureau, these summons regarding the Lourdes Mallari investment corporation (Lourdes Mallari Associate Inc.) in the Caloocan City Hall. Complaints against the company's president were filed by some 400 people.

Lala Rimando

Fire in north Metro

FIRE struck an abandoned cold storage building in Malabon City and a residence in Navotas on Monday. At 8 a.m. on Tuesday, fire broke out in the storage facility at the Rizal Commercial Estate, Manila North Highway, Barangay Tonsuya. The building was long been abandoned after it was razed by an Jan. 2 firefighters investigators said the fire started on Navotas' Main Avenue, Tuesday, another fire broke out at the storage room of Energizer Philippines at 13 Road, Bagumbayan Navotas. No fire was put out at 8:20 a.m.

Edson Tandoc Jr.

Killer uncle tells

ELIZABETH TRINIDAD, a five-year-old girl, was found dead with multiple stab wounds on her body, including a deep gash on her throat, allegedly inflicted on her by her uncle Rolando Bidaud, 32, on Jan. 31. The victim reportedly was rescued by her aunt after the attack. Bidaud was arrested by Malabon police on the following day. Bidaud's wife, Rosalie Bidaud, 28, was also arrested by police. She was charged with parricide for allegedly failing to report the crime to the police, according to Chief Inspector Rosalio Cruzaldo Jr. of the Malabon Police District.

Lala Rimando

Ailing Abadilla convict decries 'persecution' by NBP officials

By Tina Santos
and Marjorie Dorp

LESS than five years before he is scheduled to die by lethal injection, convicted kidnap-for-ransom mastermind Rolando Abadilla has asked the Supreme Court to order his transfer from the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) to the Philippine National Police (PNP) custodial center in Camp Crame.

Abadilla, who is suffering from kidney ailment, said he was being persecuted by NBP officials who have been trying to kill him.

In a petition filed with the high court on Jan. 26, Abadilla said he was being persecuted by NBP officials who have been trying to kill him

TABUGOS diagnosed with lymphoma.

UP cager faces fight of his life

By Dennis U. Eros

UNIVERSITY of the Philippines playmaker Leo Jon-jon Tabugos, whose overall size belies his huge capacity for winning, is facing the biggest fight of his young life.

Only 21, the sophomore Arts and Letters standout from Dilidian leaves for his diversified duties and outside friendship, was recently diagnosed with lymphoma.

Lymphoma is a broad term encompassing a variety of cancers of the lymphatic system, which helps filter out bacteria and is important in fighting diseases.

The 5-foot-7 Tabugos, a prized recruit two years ago from the Iloilo Red Cube, acted on findings by Dr. Chito Cruz last week.

He was with now Alvarez-star Lenny Benavie and Magnum Manabrew and San Beda Lions' Arjan Cordero when the Cubs won the NCAA Junior title in 1999. Tabugos also boasted of two national championship (2001).

Initially, the self-spoken Tabugos was initially diagnosed with rubella, a term for "German" more at the Capitol Medical Center in Medical City revealed the cancer.

"He's a very good boy. I have such a big heart to see against him," said multi-titled San Beda coach Art Boddiles. "Tabugos's coach from grade school to high school."

Boddiles said it took him two days before leaving the gym to call Tabugos upon learning of his former team's condition.

"Yes, for his cancer of the lymph nodes," said Boddiles. "But he's a fighter and the whole San Beda community is behind him in this fight."

Late 90 gets, UP coach, and a fund-raiser is being finalized to help Tabugos.

TOUR DE LANGKAWI

Espiritu vanguard of Casino assault

ESPIRITU

A SELECTION of veteran Tour Pilipinas cyclists, representing the Casino Filipino Trade Team, will assume the country's gun on Friday in the fourth edition Tour de Langkawi in Malaysia.

The Casino Filipino pistons will be led by Lauriglen Espiritu, 2nd and 1996 Manila Tour champion Victor Espiritu and Ryan Tungcalag. Espiritu Sports' top rider is last year's Tour Pilipinas.

"The Filipinos will be pitted against some of the best riders in the world," said Louie Carbon, Negros consultant for sports development and Carbon-Negros Sports project director.

Trained by Olympian Norberto Oronan, the other members of the team are Tour of Mindanao champion Leojen Lloyd Amosante, Marcelo Antonio, Roland Gorriceta, Allie Catubis, Villamor Bulseco and Albert Pelayarre.

Espiritu-led Filipino cyclists also bet on scrambling up fifth among Asian riders. The million-at-stake also placed fifth in the Asian classification behind Iran, Japan, the Nong Kuni Korporation of Thailand, All-Iran and Malaysia.

Fash, Welcoat break tie in vital Game 3

SIMSON of Fash drives past Mars Pingris in Game One.

With the momentum suddenly on his side, Fash Dalawampung attempts to gain the upperhand against Welcoat Paints when they clash in today's Game 3 of the PBL Heineken Cup title playoffs at the Pasig Sports Center.

The Liquid Power and the best-of-three series by scoring a hard-earned, double-overtime 94-90 victory in Game One Saturday when they bounced back from big fighting losses and determination.

"That's reason enough for us to believe we can win this. It's still 1-1 (from 1-0)which is a step taking us lightly," said Fash coach Jason Harrall, who kept on believing in his work even after Welcoat's 79-60 rout in Game 1.

But Welcoat, whose pro-bound import-turn Cleveland hit the Purefoods-star in Game 2, is determined to turn the tables around.

"We worried that Game 2 was a one-player of game," said Welcoat coach Leo Isles Austria. "I think we have to match that physicality to expect an intense and emotional game tomorrow."

Game 3 is set at 4 p.m. right after league leaders Red Bull Barako and Air21 Express tie-up and the season's other two powerhouses. Talk-zone stars James Yap and Asi-ales Tenorio are battling it out for the MVP honors.

A big threat on the side of Welcoat is Pete Amo Sisson, the 6-foot-4 Purefoods recruit, who scored 20 points in Game 2 by shooting 9-of-13 from the field, including 3-of-6 three-point line.

The 23 year-old Sisson, who hails from Hinds Condiam and a management graduate of the University of Mindanao in Davao, also had three rebounds and six assists aside from playing the lead role in the unusual scenario after Nick Adenon had fouled out.

Sisson scripted a nine-win, nine-month contract with Purefoods, which guaranteed him a salary of P80,000 and P120,000 in the first and second year, respectively.

Ironically, the Power Masters, who got lengthy, multimillion-peso new rookies Chris the Hotdogs...Yap, Jesse Sison and Paul Asadi—were non-factors in Game 2.

Yap could only score 16 points—none in the second overtime. Sison managed to contribute five, while Asadi fired an. Mark Anthony Sison and Jun Magsapoc of Fully Alliance combo.

Next every Wednesday at 4 p.m. on IBC-13, the PBL sees a knockout system where only the winners advance to the latter stages of the tournament.

The last two men standing after the 10-team 20-round league meet up to fight in the championship in May.

Tour Pilipinas revives 'killer' Baguio stage

THE RACE to Baguio stage has been revived as the toughest stage in the 2004 Tour Pilipinas, which opens its 10-stage trek to Benguet and rounds up with a criterium in Manila on April 4.

There are few other laps with uphill stretches but none comes close to the Baguio lap, which, combines disordered riding and tough climbing skills to conquer.

Set for April 2 over close to 200 kms, the 94 riders will be flagged off from the Burnham Park, go down through Marcos Highway then return to Baguio through Naguilian. After going down Marcos Highway a second time, the field heads back to the finish at Burnham Park right the post-climbing Harrison.

In last year's revived race, the late Fernando Lo Datoc-Baguio slope took the place of the Baguio-to-Baguio run, but Tour organizers decided to put the dreaded stage back in the islanders's signature lap.

Datoc-Baguio is the stepping-lead the Baguio-to-Baguio is the ultimate hill-climb test with the overall leader after the lap eventually handing in champion.

The Bikalang Manok stretch between Naga City and Siare, Camarines Norte during the Tour's 6th stage on April 1 is also a breaking test for the race's Trek. Another uphill climb is also what is known as the Tinang Ki in Antipolo, Quezon second to the field the under the

Barcelona heads PBBL 2004 cast

PHILIPPINE junior basketball champion Ilo-Ilo Barcelona heads the stellar cast of the 2004 Philippine Preparatory League (PBBL) summer.

Barcelona, a protege of Lenard Lucenito from Cagayan de Oro City, spearheaded several 20-man, Princess, with 4 WOs.

Coach Sevastian Barcelona-host Sherwan Sino for the reserve junior line, seasoning the crown.

The nine Barcelona will be challenged by 11 other ranked fighters in the 2004 PBBL junior basketball championship.

Blasting Barcelona's path into the grueling tournament is RPMs 2 Pets of 2004 stable who is racing to stand revenge.

Joining them are RP No. 2 Pembilis Mekaddos of LSAB Gym, No. 4 Bonifacio Campeon, VPBA No. 4 Romeo Catorce of SGA-stable, RP No. 7 Mark Jalen of Sun Mojo stable, No. 9 Federico Bonjon of Sachet Hardy stable, No. 10 Carlo Arenal of Ilo-Ilo stable, MP No. 3 Albert Cera of Dante Mercado stable, RP No. 9 Roberto Rodriguez of Robert Bonaventure stable, DP No. 12 Allan Puentes of J. Jon Pedro stable, MP No. 16 Michael Aguayo, Marvin Guardian of Mekko Sabel stable, and Tom Dolinar

The first two rounds will be challenged by Barcelona and Pembilis Mekaddos of LSAB Gym. Both teams will be challenged by Barcelona and Pembilis Mekaddos of LSAB Gym.

Batangas hosts Asian F3 starting April 24

THE BIGGEST car-racing event ever to hit the country flags off on April 24 when the first of six legs of the Asian Formula 3 Championship is held in the Batangas Racing Circuit.

The Philippines and China host three legs each of the prestigious circuit slated at producing local drivers who could make it to the elite Formula One.

Aston Racing's 3 Grey class four Dynamic Skins, chief organizer of the event, said the Asian F3 offers the opportunity to the local drivers to pursue their dreams of becoming the first Filipino to make it to the Formula One races.

Since its inception in 2000, Petron and Philippine Sports have been sponsored up to now international F3

Mat's gambit

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

Summer remains the top gun of the NCFF and thus effectively makes this is his most influential Mondays by both operation of the NCFF's charter and definition of their duties. Tell takes orders from Summer Sr., whom does Chat put the (supposed) solution to the chess imbroglio that bogged the alliance days?

Tell is in yes, but Summer, from all indications, still runs the show. If we go by rules the NCFF provision say:

Any and Song will heed Dat but not Sum-mer."

I can easily confused.

The papers said Tell's appointment would supposedly help to patch up the "differences between the country's top players." If that was what Mat wanted Tell to do, Mat did not have to appoint Tell to the position. It is also within the normal means so that either would have realized. Tell would resemble the rehearsing parties, offer them coffee, give them a piece of his mind and, voila, it's done.

Tell is a very busy man. He is the present manager of the Pale-officer Bantu, a Pilipino, creative board member and the Nike ratings administrator. He can't possibly attend to so few 5-job at the NCFF with the diligence of a full-time employee. And let a lot of our pace a crisis?

C'mon, release his ass your moving to quit, sir, lo!

I heard the guy Tell replaced, international arbiter Gene Polistico, is hurting.

Oh, well, the change name people do just to copy the Spice, TV's 90's Brad-ded celebrities.

I just hope Mat's move to appoint Tell to replace Gene did not violate provisions of the NCFF charter. Otherwise, there could be in a can deeper than what a grandmaster would find himself in with a single misstep/move.

SAYBREAK. If you believe in the Free Quotient, stop reading this. I was recently given a paper purportedly showing that Ike Weir Quotient was the 2002 National Consumer Choice Awardee for the "Man Who Let the Philippines Down and The Philippine Consumers Affairs Foundation. "It was cited as the "Top Multi-level Marketing Company of the Year" in the 20th Annual Time-under Consumer Excellence & Best Day Memorial Awards held at the SFF Theatre, Cargo Agononcillo, Quezon City. The officers listed for the office were Jonathan N. Hanna, Sec. Aida M. Ortiz, Gelo A. Uriah, Dean Amelia F. Magsipi and Jennifer P. Barrera. President Macapagal Arroyo was listed as the Honorary Presenter. My colleague Mon Tulfo said he has no idea Tulfo Foundation or their relatives that the Free Quotient "is not involved in pyramiding schemes." Some business-hall players have asked me about the Free Quotient, whose president in 2002 was Khoshru Tadvalar Bamadon. Sorry, but all I know about the Free Quotient is it gave out a lousy P2,000 of your P5,000 investment to the company the P2,000 you receive they call it "your shopping money." If you want to know more about the Free Quotient...please inquire from its offices at 8th, 8th Floor The Taipan Place, Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Tels. 687-9333/687-9334 (www.freequotient.org)

Aguilar, Marave, Bumgarner lead Golden Wheel awardees

Alfrdel notorious champion Glenn Aguilar, ace footballer Hidilyn Diaz, Peyton Manter and karate Michelle Bumgarner head the roster of last year's best drivers and riders to be feted today during the Golden Wheel Awards Night at the Cultural Theater, Andrews Ave. of the PCSO Tower, Mehlaan City.

The Golden Wheel Foundation, composed of heads of different car motorsports disciplines, will also honor the top performers in the country's sports, triathlon, duathlon, rallying, dirt racing and formula Tours.

Sen. Robert Barbers has been invited to be the guest of honor and speaker of the awards night.

The Hall of Fame Award of the Year and the Hall of Fame award will also be named from among the winners in each of the 12 categories.

SportsTV
Compiled by I. Magpoc
TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 3, 2004
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SPORTS
E-mail: sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Tokiyoki S. Holmstrom
Assistant Editor Edwin H. Villanueva
A 17

9 NSAs lead move to oust Buhain

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CITING "lack of wisdom and ability," nine national sports associations have started a drive for the ouster of Eric Buhain as chair of the Philippine Sports Commission.

The disgruntled officials hope to get the other members from the 36-strong NSA group making up the Philippine Olympic Committee to sign a petition addressed to President Macapagal-Arroyo seeking the resignation of Buhain from what they say is a "grossly mismanaged" agency.

The complaint against Buhain actually boiled down to "lack of resources and support" for the training of national athletes and the activities of the NSAs.

Ike Bolanos, a former basketball commissioner, yesterday said the association had to borrow over the PSC fund allotted 60 percent of its overall budget, or roughly P250 million, to the NSAs in 2003 alone.

The PSC chief added that of the P100 million financial assistance approved by the board, the agency has already disbursed P60 million. The balance was to be given "subject to the availability of funds."

"We never had final funds and signatures by the NSAs [and] take it seriously when we say the funds are subject to availability of funds," said Bolanos, who pushed his second run in office last month.

Buhain explained that PSC relies on the monthly disbursements from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation which is never exact and depends on the revenues of the agency.

The nine presidents who signed the petition were Mauritius Bagtas (swimming), Noel Bustamante (gymnastics), Ben Delfin (judo), Benjie Ramos (boxing), Ed Villaluz (athletics), Richard Lobaton (bowling), Lauro Lao (bodybuilding), Jun Gil Sy (canoeing) and Claudio Alfano (sailing).

Sources said the NSAs drafts met with POC president Cojuangco and bowling head Peter Mendoza and poured out their grievances, particularly the delay of the transmittal from the PSC.

The disgruntled NSA presidents, who met secretly on Jan. 6 at the Joint Hotel to plot their moves, later been making the rounds at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, gathering signatures from fellow NSA heads who have been given support from the PSC.

"This is to request an discussion and board confidence on the present leadership of Chot Reyes, Buhain of the Philippine Sports Commission," read a part of their petition letter dated Jan. 14.

It added, "We sincerely question his (Buhain's) wisdom and ability to lead Philippine sports especially in this time that we are preparing for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games."

The letter also said that the PSC is "grossly mismanaged" and that Buhain's "continued presence as PSC chief undermines your (GMA's) good intention to promote the program of a strong republic."

"It's unfortunate that despite all these, [NSAs] still felt that we have neglected them," said Bolanos. "For pinagtulungan ako (Philippines' success in the (Vietnam) SEA Games), we can say that we have focused our attention to the NSAs and the athletes."

In 2003, Bolanos said, P64 million was given directly to the NSAs, on top of the P100 million in allowance to the national athletes, P56 million in local allowances and P6 million for medals and cash bills of the NSA officers around SEAG.

He admitted that the discrepancy in some NSA offices had been cut because of PSC's balance-to-pay routine.

Before the Vietnam SEA Games December, the PSC was expected to owe the NSAs P90 million.

A POC official wondered, however, why the top three performing NSAs in the SEAG were not among the signatories.

Athletics claimed eight gold, while rowing and taekwondo had six and five gold, respectively.

BUHAIN Accusations have no basis

PACQUIAO's winning victory against Barrera has convinced HBO to abandon the Mexican

Pacquiao inherits lucrative HBO deal

Barrera junked

By Sabrina G. Lagumbay

CABLE giant HBO has officially reconsidered its multi-million dollar deal with Marco Antonio Barrera in favor of boosting the image of Filipino Manny Pacquiao as the pay-per-view market.

Kevin Heaney, HBO spokesman, indicated in an interview with the Mexican press that the decision to nullify Barrera's deal, reportedly worth millions of dollars, came after the Mexican suffered a devastating 12-6 second technical knockout at the hands of Pacquiao last November.

Pleasantly surprised that HBO is now planning to invest millions on Olympics-bound the Filipino immediately after the MBA IBF title, 30-day television host Manuel Marquez.

HBO has set a May 22 date for the Pacquiao-Marquez fight in the US although Bob Hawkins, the Filipino champ's business manager, said the title clash is not a done deal.

"We still have to negotiate with HBO and the boxers have to sit down and discuss the fight," said Hawkins when he accompanied Pacquiao during a recent visit to the hospital where the boxing fans was treated to a dinner in the private "Manong" floor.

Hawkins, still recovering from a minor surgical Pacquiao are scheduled to leave for the US in the middle of the month.

Heaney said that Barrera deal with HBO can still be revived once the Mexican redeems himself with victories against name boxers.

Barrera was earlier scheduled to see action on March 13 in the undercard of the Oscar Hawkey-Ricky Wright unification duel in Las Vegas, but the plan was shelved due to lack of funding and failure to have a name boxer to fight Barrera.

Barrera is now being groomed to see action on March 19 at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles against a name-less national opponent, the team to be announced by the another Barrera co-ordinate.

Meanwhile, promoter Bob Arum also expressed interest in pitting Marquez against Pacquiao in a victory could do serious in HBO coffers, host for the Mexican.

"A great possibility exists that the fight with Pacquiao is done, therefore we are fighting to the Marquez debacle is just comical, like the one Bud Barrera had. If Marquez beats Pacquiao," Arum stated.

Patriots capture Super Bowl in grand fashion

FIESTA IMPORT

Phone Pals tap 6-8 ABA veteran

By Jose Navarro

ITS lineup boosted by two key acquisitions at the start of the year, Talk 'N Text gained added power by getting a prolific inside-outside operator in the Phone Pals' import for the coming PBA Fiesta Conference.

Randy Holcom, listed at 6-foot-8 who had an impressive stint with the Fresno Heat 'Silver' in the ABA, arrived yesterday together with the entire Talk 'N Text squad, which went through a two-week workout under US RCBA coach Jerry Tuckmanis in the United States.

"The workouts were really exhausting, [while there's] unique Phil-more document and from the players to the coaches, as for Holcom, he's a workhorse 8, he's a team like sure," said a Talk 'N Text official.

Scouting report revealed Holcom, who almost made the Arizona Hawks roster in the NBA draft scrutiny, to be a good defender, who could play the small or power forward position with utmost efficiency.

The outside shooting of the Phone Pals was hinted Tuesday by would-renowned shooting coach Jerry Bogle in their workout under Tuckmanis.

Bogle is credited for the vast improvement of Us Lakers' Kobe Bryant and Stephen Marbury of Phoenix, among others, and is renowned for shooting techniques of several NBA teams and PBA squads.

Before their 'Di Ako' Da Phone Mo' debut 2003 PBA MVP Willie Miller from Red Bull Barako and 6-foot-9 Yancy De Ocampo from the Sta Rosa Laguna in a pair of tenth season pros that made the Meralco V Daughters-owned Talk 'n Text almost invincible on paper.

MILLER

DE OCAMPO

In Olympus, the league's top rookie pick in 2002, and Miller paced 2003 MVP Asi Taulava, Rookie of the Year Jimmy Alapag, Bong Revilla, Harvey Carey, Patrick Fran, Mark Telan, Ta Pablo and Dunhil Belano in the Talk 'N Text lineup.

In another development, Lenny Cooke of Purefoods was set to arrive but might on board a Northwest Airlines convoy, noted phone-opted Mike Gonzalez told the Inquirer.

But among the imports he brought to the country, Gonzalez singled out Coach Chot Mark finished as the most impressive so far.

"Randy is a is sharpe and plays very good in practice despite experiencing dizziness and fatigue due to jetlag," Gonzalez quoted Coca-Cola coach Chot Reyes as saying.

The 6-foot-8 Kentfield national Intruder morning and immediately plunged into a strenuous Tagaytay workout.

Only Alaska has yet to secure a reinforcement for the PBA Fiesta Conference on Feb. 22.

The Aspirants learned that Alaska coach Tim Cone, who is in the US, is torn between former UCLA standout Matt Barnes and the 6-foot-7 Chamblian Johnson.

Other imports who have either signed up or consulted Cone are two-time All-American Phil Bell Barnes, Alvin Jefferson, Buffalo, Mo. Lucky Lamont Wilson, Mississippi Guard Jermaine Wallace, Ike Lang (BBB) and Shelly Marsh Dudson.

Finally! A Revolutionary breakthrough in hair restoration is now available!
845-0879

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Morales
Assistant Editor Carolie S. Martinez

DELL
Dimension 1100
Dell Computer Corporation

T-bill rates rise; peso weakens

By Dianne E. Rufino

THE GOVERNMENT'S short-term borrowing cost went up by as much as 11.5 basis points in yesterday's auction of treasury bills as banks sought a higher return on their funds due to increasing political risks.

The Bureau of Treasury yesterday said it would only subscribe a total amount in the rates at its auction where off its appointment market low unfavorable bids in the coming weeks, would be accepted. National Treasurer Roger Ejercito said yesterday.

"The market's apprehension is a warning development so such rate triggers an upturn in the yield rates to rise, especially our decision to accept higher rates today had tempered the market and that rates would continue in the coming weeks," he added.

Yields went up even as the peso dollar the Manila trade yesterday. The local currency closed at P56.40 to $1 from P56.08 last Friday.

The benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate went up by 9.5 basis points to 5.264 percent, the 182-day rate climbed by 11.5 basis points to 5.718 percent and the 364-day rate increased by 20.4 basis points to 6.294 percent.

Only the 91-day treasuries were well received as bids reached P6 billion, allowing the government to raise P5 billion.

Bidders agreed on the six rounds and one-year debt papers prompted the government to accept bids worth only P1.76 billion and P2.875 billion against the amount that still P3.5 billion and P4.5 billion.

"The market is nervous with all these political issues. But we have to let the rates go up mildly or not some of the pressure. Otherwise, we would not be facing a difficult battle with the market," Ejercito said.

The problem, according to the treasurer, was that with the political uncertainties the market was being over-reactive to any news whether a bid on longer time frame or a bid on longer time frame in a way what the government wanted to happen with the rates.

"The market is reluctant to bet on the long term so it is demanding a higher return," he said.

"But if we shift to short-term, risk pricing up the entire yield curve. We have been flexible to enhancing our domestic borrowings because we're large budget deficit we have to finance this year. The only option is to stay close to the borrowing requirements to keep inflation at a pace or lower than we have yet to do," the treasurer added.

Ejercito said that the market was also worried over the higher inflation rate forecasts of the central bank. Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said BSP was expecting inflation in January to range between 5.2 and 5.6 percent.

US woos local firms to vie for Iraqi projects

By Michelle V. Rosca

DBP opens ₱1.7-B credit facility for NFA, millers

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines has opened a ₱1.7-billion credit facility for the modernization of state-owned National Food Authority (NFA) and the rice milling industry.

"This is the first time in 30% 33-year history that it will modernize and upgrade its post-harvest facilities," Yap told the business in an interview.

Yap noted that the majority of the rice that result in the shortfall in rice supply, which was estimated at 800,000 to 900,000 metric tons per year.

He said the modernization program could help minimize the country's rice importation, which cost some ₱10 billion to ₱20 billion.

The DBP and the DBP have already signed the memorandum of agreement that will be presented to President Macapagal-Arroyo this week at the Rice Summit to be held at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Part of the DBP facility is a ₱200-million loan that would be availed of by non-millers.

In a separate interview, Philippine Confederation of Rice Millers president Joji Co said the DBP loan would allow them to put up state-of-the-art equipment that could improve the recovery of quality rice grains.

"With the said loan, we can acquire vertical refinishers and pneumatic feeders that could also improve the quality of the polay (unhulled rice) that we mill process," Co said.

Aside from increasing milling recovery, he said, the new facility would help prolong the shelf life of the grains.

"We will soon be able to get rid of our old machines that consume too much electricity," Co said.

HEROES FOR HEALTH AWARD
Pfizer Inc. president and country manager Ray Gerardo Rasuro (second from left) presents the second-runner-up prize of the Not too far Health Award to Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit during the launch of the award held at the Department of Health. Looking on are (from left): Pfizer corporate affairs director Rio Villanueva and Health human resource development bureau director Kenneth Ronquillo.

Tan to lease 100-ha property in Clark for aviation facility

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Tycoon Lucio Tan is sealing an agreement for the lease of a 100-hectare property in the southeast portion of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport for development into an operation base for his aviation companies, an official of the Clark International Airport Corp. said.

Jake Morris Yap, CIAC president, said Tan, who has major stakes in Philippine Airlines, Asiaphoenix and MicroAsia, was also keen on basing the Clark-based Air Ocean Aviation outfit, retired PAL pilot Ben Rico Bornes.

Tan's interest in Clark has been increasing in view of the scheduled transfer here of some 1.5 million Pinoy Aquino International Airport passengers starting 2005, Yap said.

The year, there issued expected infrastructure projects that will integrate the development of Clark, Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Zambales and the Luzon Industrial Park in Tarlac will be linked to the DMIA. These projects are the North Luzon Expressway expansion, Subic-Clark-Tarlac Toll Road and the Manila-Clark North Rail Transit.

The construction of the toll road and the electric-powered rail starts in March.

The Aliens Morris Hotel will start the ₱1.1-billion redo project for the DMIA at Pole 7.

"The [Macapagal] administration is moving heaven and earth to make [Clark airport] a significant aviation point in Asia," Yap said during the inauguration of the DMIA's refurbished apron and taxiways on Friday.

The new of the DMIA as a cargo-handling facility was boosted after President Macapagal-Arroyo approved the government's open-skies policy in December last year.

Yap said the DMIA "is actually the place to be."

With its two 3.2-km runways, he said the Clark airport could still be expanded.

Nieto's passenger capacity, currently at 4 million, has reached its full level.

Yap said the prospects of DMIA were better now. By 2007, he said tourist giant Federal Express would be getting 40 hectares for its Asian operations.

Philippine Cargo and Said he are "interested" in coming their cargo businesses from Clark, he said.

Yap said the main ramp of the DMIA could soon accommodate at least 10 aircraft at a time after the rehabilitation of the airport's apron and taxiways.

Emmanuel Monge, DMIA general manager, said work started on all the 600 11 Boeing 727, 747, 757 and 767 that now in the current and projected fleet of the United Parcel Service (UPS) could now use the rehabilitated area.

Ben Sola, UPS general manager, said the developments being undertaken at the 2,500-hectare airport were "signs of the public of will and foresight" of the government.

The UPS, Sola said, was increasing its nightly flights to 24 and its cargo volume from 700 to 1,000 tons. *Tonette Orejas, PBR Central Luzon Bureau*

NSC plant rehab starts today

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE REHABILITATION of the Bigas-based steel plant of National Steel Corp. is set to formally start today after the consortium bidder Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd. (GHL) signed last week a memorandum of agreement with the steel company's creditor-banks.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to lead the inaugural ceremony at NSC's Bigas plant, which was shut down in 1,000-day to debt problems amounting to about ₱20 billion.

The reopening of the NSC's steel plant is seen to boost Bigas's economy as well as the country's steel industry. It is also expected to bring back to work about 500 former employees of the steel plant.

Mahesh Mirpuri, founding chair of GHL's holding company Ispat group, said bringing back NSC into operation would significantly boost the country's steel exports and, thus, help the economy grow.

"We are looking at the Chinese market for HC's steel products," said Mirpuri.

GHL said NSC's reopening was expected to contribute about ₱4 billion to the country's gross domestic product and some ₱1.57 million in taxes to the Bigas City government. The company also projected that NSC would need about some ₱1 billion in taxes to the national government.

Also, with an annual production capacity of 1.1 million metric tons of steel products, NSC is expected to generate ₱700 million in revenue per year. The assessed is based on the current average steel price of $300 per ton.

Pramod Mittal, Ispat group chair and son of the elder Mittal, said that winning the right to operate NSC was established of one of the company's goals. He said his father has been interested in the Bigas-based steel plant since 1986.

GHL won the right over NSC's assets after the terms of its offer were approved by the majority of NSC's creditor-banks. Under the MOA between the creditors and GHL, the latter, investors will pay the former a total of ₱15.25 billion, ₱1 billion of the amount will be paid in cash, while the remaining ₱12.25 billion will be paid in eight years.

GHL won the right for a 90-day exclusive negotiation with NSC's creditor-banks after its original bid of ₱11.9OF billion beated the ₱9" billion offered by LMM Holdings Ltd., the only other bidder.

Ispat group, the holding company of GHL, is engaged not only in the manufacture of iron and steel, but also mining, power generation, infrastructure, hotels production and software development, among other businesses. It also has over 3,000 employees worldwide.

2003 budget deficit at ₱199.8B

By Cecilia S. Bardon

THE BSP/NGAC administration is scheduled to announce today the final budget deficit figure for last year.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza told reporters yesterday that the 2003 budget gap, based on latest information, was at ₱199.8 billion, which was below the ₱202-billion ceiling.

For the year, the government is aiming to keep the gap between revenues and expenditure at ₱207.5 billion, even after the Development Budget Coordination Committee increased the revenue goal by ₱1.2 billion to ₱474.4 billion.

The revenue goal was originally set at ₱471.2 billion. The government will use the additional revenue to finance expenditure items on top of the ₱600 billion in spending as proposed to Congress, under the 2003 General Appropriations Act.

Government sources said the ₱1.2 billion in additional revenue would be used to settle the government's outstanding account payables.

The additional revenue would come from the adjustments to the goals of the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue by ₱0.6.2 billion, the Bureau of Customs raised its collection target to ₱118.58 billion while the Bureau of Treasury committed to deliver ₱40.73 billion, up from the original target of ₱39.0 billion.

The additional revenue from these agencies was expected to offset the reduction in the Bureau of Internal Revenue's collection goal to ₱276.3 billion, from the original target of ₱280.4 billion.

Government officials explained that the revenue agency BIR had cut the BIR's goal after Congress failed to pass crucial revenue measures, including the reclassification of beer and tobacco excise taxes which were supposed to raise for the government about ₱7 billion to ₱8 billion collection.

Edeza confirmed the government's strong revenue performance but was for the lower budget gap.

The BIR said collections in 2003 reached ₱428.3 billion, higher by about ₱1.3 billion than its goal of ₱426.27 billion. In December, the Internal revenue agency collected ₱56.7 billion or ₱2.2 billion more than the target of ₱54.5 billion for the month.

The Bureau of Customs collected ₱101.656 billion in taxes and tariffs in 2003, surpassing the ₱100.656-billion goal by 6 percent and the year-ago level by ₱9.8 billion or 10.2 percent.

Arbitration court dismisses SGS case vs RP

By Clarissa S. Batino
and Philip E. Tubeza

THE COURT OF arbitration for international commercial disputes in Switzerland has dismissed a case filed by the Philippine government against Societe Generale de Surveillance S.A. (SGS) over the collection of $17.4 million in unpaid fees.

The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), in a letter sent to Malacañang on Thursday, said the case filed by Societe Generale de Surveillance S.A. (SGS) against the Philippine government was dismissed for lack of jurisdiction.

SGS, the inspection body ordered by the government to conduct pre-shipment inspection of imports, had sought $17.4 million in damages from the government.

The tribunal ruled that, as a fact, it cannot act outside its jurisdiction over the dispute between SGS and the Philippines. The tribunal, apart from declaring it has no jurisdiction over the dispute between the two parties," said Justice Undersecretary Manuel J. C. Teehankee.

The seven pre-shipment inspection companies used the Philippines on April 2002 after a failed to settle $6.06 billion in shipments for services rendered from 1998 to March 2002, when SGS' contract was terminated.

Congress did not contract any budget for the payment of the government's obligations with SGS, as some legislators questioned the amount claimed and the charges slapped by SGS on the government.

"We are pleased with the outcome, but will now look fairly soon to see what they will do," said Finance Secretary Jessica Lotenzo.

Finance Assistant Secretary Emmanuel Bonoan said the government has really to move SGS out of the Philippines soon.

Finance officials said the government's contract with SGS recognizes the jurisdiction of a Philippine court to settle the issue.

Before SGS went to court, the then-ousted administration had asked the Swiss firm to allow the government to settle its obligations over a number of years.

The Swiss firm had billed the Philippine government an expenditure of P1.48 billion (Swiss francs 249,139,239.34 at an exchange rate of 1 Swiss to P33.2027) for services rendered from Sept. 1998 to March 2002.

After reviewing the billing, some have lowered to reduce the claim of SGS and that the government should pay only P1.05 billion.

The task force had recommended that P187.9 million be disbursed from the SGS bill and that another P334 million be charged to unused facilities.

The Swiss inspection, according to the finance department, is willing to forego the P334 million provided that an agreement is forged on the award of payment for the rest of the obligation.

Secretary Jessica Lotenzo said in February 2002 that when the government first screened its billings [illegible] was in the P4.6 billion, the [illegible] agreed to P1.05 billion.

Lotenzo [illegible] the [illegible] process in the obligation to P1.05 billion.

2nd Driver Build Project " KENSINGTON PLACE " Launch

Golfinger

LAST week, I bumped into my old friend, Dick Villalon, who was junior Philippine golf champion many years ago, and who is now a top executive and consultant. He persuaded me, much against my better judgment, to take up golf again. I have not touched a golf club for about 10 years since a burglar made off with my golf bag. But he was very persistent, so I agreed to go to the driving range last Saturday.

"We got a bucket of balls and he checked my stance, swing and grip. Then the ball box put a ball on the tee and I took my first swing. I was imagining that I was walking down the 18th green. I think ahead of Tiger Woods, when suddenly Dick's voice interrupted my reverie. "I think it would be better if you hit the ball on the front end of the ball."

Quickly changing mode, I pretended to have been choosing a wood. I pulled myself together and took a half-swing. There was solid contact but I did not see the ball fly. Instead, to my horror, the ball box lay unconscious. Fortunately, Dick had advised him to move a couple hefore so he was only stunned. Guessing confidence, I began hitting the ball hands and to different directions. One ball struck a waiter in the lower abdomen, an understandable shot. He doubled up in agony and shouted something to someone, or it may have been Tagalog. I assumed to apologize but he translated very fluently that for him I had done enough damage for one day. Dick drove me home.

As I got out of the car, my entire body went into spasm, and I found my knees rocked nearly under my armpits and my hands swapped around my feet. My wife rushed to our neighbor who is a Cuna practice from Egypt. He said, "It will cost a lot to straighten his back. You had better go to the bank and get a back-to-back loan." I had more zapped Aloha than a B-3 so Dick pulled me free while my wife pulled my arms. Suddenly there was a loud crack and my vertebrae snapped back into place. I feel fine except that on waking I was 6'4 inches and now I am 6'8 inches.

In Indonesia, the farmers who were forced to destroy all their chickens have been given checks. I wish somebody would give me one.

GMA and FPJ are scrubbed to form a coalition. They are pals again.

In Germany, a man who pleaded guilty to eating another person was charged with manslaughter. I am sorry. That should have been second-degree.

Don't forget to see Disney's latest movie about clay.

Mr. Bearbull

Ron Nathew

Brother Bearbull,

. . .

LAST week was quite eventful. On the news that Moody's had downgraded our debt, our sovereign debt and Tony Boy broke the Pinoy race 27 points, to my daily anesthetic, which is a very outspoken, I wrote that this was a crazy response and that if a Mormon spoke out of left pronounced thing over the Philippine Stock Exchange they would have expected no sign of intelligent life.

I further predicted that the market would drop 50 points and return to the 1,500 level. Most days, aided by a correction or 4% it bitter and manner of a coup, which was blown up out of all proportion by the media, the index fell 26 points. The following day, at 8.8 tenth or 7 points to 1,383 and today is damn great, as I bought 5 points to 1,447. This is 63 percent retracement from the high.

I suppose the market was relieved that our bonds had not been downgraded by two notches but the other shoe has still to drop. It is a sad reflection of the Philippine economy. While the rest of Asia is booming and China's GDP grew by 9% 2003 was 4.1 percent, our exports have made no headway and investment for renewed weak. Industrial production is falling and inflation is creeping higher.

The peso is the worst performing currency in the galaxy, hitting an all-time high of 56.22 before the central bank decided that it had to intervene. The peso recovered to 55.98, that day but the amount of dollars it raises fed was an exceptional $202 million. At that rate, our reserves will rapidly be depleted.

The Senate has not yet passed last year's budget and the Supreme Court has destroyed all hope of reviving the mining industry. We must not be a sizeable producer of gold, silver and copper, and when I came here in 1990, mining shares were the blue chips, and gold touched $800 an ounce. When the gold price raged to $400, the mines shut down as they became unprofitable but there is still gold coming to be mined.

An Australian mining company is willing to invest $1.5 million in Philex to renovate a mine, which contains a large quantity of gold, now up to $400 an ounce. But the Supreme Court said that, under the Constitution, foreign companies could only supply technical and financial assistance to Filipino miners. The bank does not do trade but the Supreme Court has since they are lawyers whose job is to interpret the law. The fault lies with the Congress and the former has not passing new laws to encourage investment.

All foreign companies put up the money and we don't we have the expertise, and he them, have to search, make (not 100 percent). That would create new jobs and help our balance of payments as gold is sold in dollars. We have the highest unemployment rate in Asia, 16 percent Digital Telecom Philippines, Inc. 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 1,000,000
Globe Telecom Inc. 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 1,000,000
Philippine Long Dist. Tel. Co. 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 1,000,000
Philippine Telegraph & Telephone Corp. 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 1,000,000
PLDT Communications & Energy Corp. 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 1,000,000
Smart Telecom Inc. 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 1,000,000
Digitel Telecom Corp. 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 1,000,000
Philippine Telecom Investment

BUSINESS

At least one thing a man can rely on.

IWC

Citigroup gives RP 'underweight' rating

By Dwin C. Dantiao

THE PHILIPPINES might get a number slice of Citigroup Asia-ex Bank's investment pie this year due to bigger big profits elsewhere.

In its global investment outlook released yesterday, CPB said it liked Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan and Hong Kong equities due to their "higher growth prospects."

The outlook was not so rosy for the Philippines because of what CPB referred to as the country's "lingering political challenges and the risk of [a] fractured agenda."

Kari Stats, CPB's head for investments in Asia Pacific and the Middle East, said the recommendation was based on how the Philippine listed equities often waste sensitive.

"If you look at the Philippines in the context of other countries, you'll find that it's not as lowly rated compared to Thailand or Taiwan. That's not to say that it's bad, it's just relatively speaking," explained.

The American bank, however, remained optimistic about the country's private wealth management market.

"The Philippine market is extremely important to us. Our presence in the country stretches beyond 100 years and some of our client relationships have spanned a few generations," CPB head for the Philippines Akhter Shah said.

"There is still much untapped potential in the market, which is why we have expanded our onshore capabilities in terms of brokers, specialists and [non-denominated products]," Shah added.

On the global front, CPB's New York-based global investment strategist Garb Wrates said there were "more opportunities" as well as "continued uncertainty" in 2004.

Yamaha expects 66% rise in motorcycle sales in '04

By Michelle V. Rama

MOTORCYCLE maker Yamaha Motor Co. Ltd. of Japan expects its sales to grow by as much as 66 percent this year on the back of an aggressive marketing campaign and the introduction of new models.

According to Manuel Xavier E. Albos, senior vice president for marketing, Yamaha expects sales to hit about P3 billion this year from P1.8 billion in 2003.

The P3-billion target for the next twelve months for sale of about 60,000 motorcycle units compared with 38,500 units sold last year.

"The company's overall assessment is that the business environment will be good for the industry. Motorcycle manufacturers in the country are optimistic the Philippines will soon reach the revenue levels of Thailand and Indonesia," said Albos.

Indonesia and Thailand are the two biggest motorcycle producers in Southeast Asia.

Albos also said Yamaha hoped to grab 10[illegible] share of the motorcycle market from its 37 percent level last year.

Rival Honda currently accounts for about 45 percent of the market.

Yamaha yesterday introduced its new models Crypton R (P46,800 cash) and Crypton Z (P50,500).

"This is the first year that Yamaha will be aggressive in [marketing] sale motorcycles. The introduction of the two new models is only the beginning," he said.

Albos said Yamaha would look on demand from first-time motorcycle buyers.

How motorcycle owners accounted for about 75 percent of sales last year.

Editor Chris Bona-Fornoso

There is no cure for the nasty Buerger's Disease, which can disfigure you for life. The only way to control the symptoms is to quit smoking

Light up and lose your toes

By Anne A. Jamboni

SMOKING can cost you an arm and a leg—literally. I nearly lost my right big toe. It's ridiculous.

I find it lucky coy-downs my that I quit the nasty habit in time. Otherwise, who knows? I might have lost all toes, or eight of them, or a few fingers.

Heck, some people even have had their leg, from knee below, amputated, or an arm cut off. It's a most excruciatingly painful death for stubborn nicotine drubards with their limbs removed, one at a time, anticipating a left to come.

Your doctors down tool on, as a way to figure into the while you're still alive. It's a disease that literally eats you up, and will continue to leisurely parody your body unless you stop smoking. And when your living wills (narrow the options) the pain you go through is unimaginable.

The condition is called thromboangiitis obliterans, or Buerger's Disease.

Like everybody else, I knew the common penalties of lighting up a sig, which included numerous types of cancers and a host of other diseases.

But my gout toe? The government warning on cigarette boxes—"smoking is dangerous to your health"—couldn't be more explicit.

'Autoimmune' reaction

Buerger's Disease is a rare acute inflammation and clotting of blood vessels in the body's extremities (the hands and feet), said to be an "autoimmune" reaction—the body's immune system attacks the body's own tissues—triggered by some combinant of behavior.

The narrowing of the vessels causes restriction of blood flow, and that's where Murphy's Law manifests in your life. For when blood supply is split, life can no longer be sustained. But, oh, you have to live through the nightmare.

My condition began on Nov. 21, 2002. It was a typical day—I woke up, hit the gym, went home, took a shower, had lunch, took off. Suddenly, my life was subtly interrupted.

That evening I arrive home limping, my big right toe throbbing subtly, piercing pain climbing through it. "There were no cuts, no discoloration, nothing. And yet clearly something was wrong.

But it's just a teeny-tiny toe, you say, surely it can't be that bad! Still, imagine the pain (ahem) a nail is driven into your toe and mercilessly hammered down. To throbs, to stings, to swells until you think it's going to burst. And it's there whether you're walking or standing or sitting or lying down.

Nothing was so robust as I overnight found it hard to sleep. Some nights I had to disrupt my leg from its bed to ease the pain. I was sweating pain (where's the cash) into my sheets, and not one of them washed.

I was given a slew of antibiotics to run down my throat—first, second, third, fourth generations...to no end. I felt like a carousel spinning on magic machine. My toe continued to throb, and I continued to puff on my.

Frustrated, I removed half the wound from its nail bed in a crazy notion that it might stop the pain. It's dumb, I know. Big mistake. Instantly, it bled, and an infection followed promptly.

Temporary relief

By February 2003 I had my entire wound

VIEWS Segue Watches managing director for international operations, and Ajay Kumar, Titan COO

NEW Trends general manager Mark Manio, Bajo Alonso and Miss World Yelva Meadows (right) congratulate Lenie Ocampo of Ocampo's Jewellery and Lorena Madgaz of Mares Balsamo, winners of Titan gold ornaments.

BUNCH Yelva chanels her version of Titan's new designs.

Giant of a watch

TITAN managing director Bhaswar Bhattacharya and sales manager for Asia Pacific Jayakumar Menon.

MEERA Manish, Asia Pacific marketing head, and Michael Foley, executive strategy head/ designer of Titan

TITANITE followers: Talent director Sonali Khandare and Victor Sasan of Dance

SPY's sleeps hatched, read Kiera Sy

MISS World Yelva Meadows chooses her necklace

SIX years like a barrels of fresh air, cool and fun, great to be with, no-frills-about. I'm talking about that iconic beauty Titan. Shedders, siblings. She was Miss India 1999 and became Miss World that same year.

Now she's been here with her budding career to us writers, and her different beauty activities. Her current one as Mandira paleogaze, was part of her job as official endorser of the new world watch, Titan Nitrides, no less.

New Trends interviewed official chairperson of Titan Watches in the Philippines, hosted a super hot party at the Peninsula Manila to launch the watch brand. The two charismatic and silkworm Patricia dived in.

One of the first of watches we noticed immediately that evening was Titan's flagship product—the Edge—which, I was told, "took three years of research and development and is considered the slimmest quartz watch in the universe."

Titan Industries Limited of India is the sixth largest manufacturer of watches in the world. Its products are sold in over 30 countries worldwide. Aside from the Edge, Titan manufactures a wide range of stylish and ultra-fashionable watches.

The collection also includes gold watches with a one-two warranty on the gold plating, finger plate, palmgrips.

Other eye-lamouring individuals at the launch were Titan's design architect Mac Bhaskar Bhatt, managing director Bijou Kurien, chief operating officer Mears Kinnick, head of the Asia-Pacific region office, and observer Michael Foley, the award-winning designer of the Titan Edge, also the New Trends international outside team, who started in full force.

To show we were not lacking in beauties ourselves, three of our very own beauty queens were there. Reigning Filipina-World titlist Rachel Arabesco (1993), Bb. Pilipinas (2002) and Asiaweek Guinness (2000).

Other ravishingbeauties were well-known philanthropists Lyssa Ruiz Ay of Binondoc, Titan Kumar, promising newcomer of TIME Gateway fame, and the Indian Ambassador, Surendra Sharma, no less.

Fine prizes

It was too interesting, super different and absolutely fun, paleogaze, the exhibition of fine prints by talented contemporary Filipino painters, which opened at the Silkworm Rama Jane Tidal Gallery.

"Without batting an eyelash" consisted of 24 fantastic prints in mixed techniques, 12 of which were entrusted to the super talented editorial portfolio with the same title.

Brought together by their passion for printmaking, the brilliant young visual artists share a common goal: "to revitalize the practice of producing portfolios of fine prints for its own benefit," for artists like Adolfo Alix Jr., Benjamin Tolentino-Cabrera, Elsa Bridges, Tita Bonal Gad and Ana Flores were joined by two New York-based Filipina printmakers, Lennore Ili Lim, and the high priest, father of Philippine printmaking himself, Manuel Baldemor, Sr. no less, dahlings!

The title signalled the varied individual responses that reflected the artists' "unshakable, conscientious and personal concerns."

"Mirror image" also connotes the classic bilateral symmetry, or effect derived from, a direct transfer of an image onto paper, through the skilled techniques used in printmaking.

All works in the portfolio were prints pulled from metal plates, limited to etching, aquatint, engraving and mixed-mint, plus explorations in other techniques.

Needless to say, paleogaze, the artists went home with pride, after most of their works were snatched with red dots.

Intro "Sold!"

SERIES Cabrera explains his work to some Japanese friends.

ADMIRING "Mirrored Images," Lennore Ili Lim, Cecile Rosales, Cynthia Flores and Arnie Alvarez

THE BIG THREE. Alliance Française deputy director Etienne Lehr with flanked by cultural and PR attaché Christine Sass and Jacob Lagaga

THE EXHIBITORS Is Bhatt, artists Jun Pierra, Tita Bonal, New York-based Lennore Ili Lim, Cleo Rodrigo, Andrea Alfonso and Benjie Cabrera

ART LOVERS. Czech Embassy consul Jana Chalupnikova and French Embassy cultural councilor Franck Hebert

RAUL Isles Jr., president of the Philippine Association of Printmakers

CHRISTINE Cabra

You can gain weight on a low-carb diet

WELL AND GOOD

TINA ANAN

YOU know a diet has become a cultural phenomenon when a radio station uses the business decisions of the food industry. The high-carb hiphopstar, low-fat diet "reigned" in the first 10 years and its impact was obvious in the proliferation of thousands of low-fat products.

Well, times are a-changing and a major revolution is going on in the American food industry and when America goes, the rest of the Westernized world is sure to follow.

Supermarket aisles that used to be devoted to low-fat food products have been transformed into low-carb diet sections. In California cyclone city's, a standalone store carrying only low-carb products opened last month. It has plans to open 5,000 branches. Convenience store giant 7-11 has jumped into the low-carb bandwagon with nearly 60 products.

Restaurant chains like Tell Fridays and Chili's have seen its load of low-carb selections in their menus. Not to be outdone, Burger King has a Sun-Low Whopper. Subway has a low-carb wrap, while Carl's Jr has a lettuce-wrapped burger.

Diet food manufacturers have also gotten the hint that low-fat is a thing of the past and low-carb is the way of the future. Low-carb chips, cookies and brownies made their entrance last year. It wouldn't surprise you can buy low-carb beers like Michelob Ultra and the soon-to-be launched Coors Aspen Edge.

Bread and pasta makers have also seen the demand for low-carb and are either dowsing coffee mug or are developing low-carb bread, pasta, bagels and doughnuts.

The low-carb phenomenon can be traced directly to the success and popularity of the Atkins diet, created by the late Dr Robert Atkins in the 70s, but which became a household word only in the last few years.

The original Atkins diet centers mainly of meat and green leafy vegetables. But, judging from the amount of money spent on low-carb products (US$4 billion last year and up to $20 billion this year, according to LowCarber, a trade newsletter), people cannot take being deprived of bread and pasta for long and we desperately searching for carb substitutes so they can have their cake and eat it, too.

How to produce a low-carb product

To reduce the carbohydrates content of a high-carbohydrate product like a muffin, manufacturers substitute flour from almonds or soy for wheat flour and use a sugar substitute like Splenda, maltitol or sorbitol. Fat is used sparingly with almost zero calories instead of sugar-like fructose and glucose.

As to be reserved, taste and texture are compromised while manufacturing a low-carb product. The product may be low in carbohydrates but also low in taste and high in cost.

What it may not be is low in calories. When something is taken out, the calories have to go somewhere and always have more calories. This is what happens to many low-fat products. They are low in fat but high in carbohydrates and sugar. Low-carb products may be low in carbs but high in fat and protein.

Confusion over terms

A creative way to produce a low-carb product is to manipulate the definition of the term. Since there is no universal definition for "low-carb."

Pick up any processed food product made by manufacturers nationwide, label it "low-carb" and you've got the instant "Atkins-approved" seal.

Many low-carb food manufacturers use a term called "net carbs." Labels can be made lower than the actual total carbohydrates. The basis is after the amount derived after subtracting carbohydrates gram from fiber and sugar alcohol in the product.

Manufacturers say carbohydrates from fiber and sugar alcohol do not make blood sugar levels rise as quickly and as high as carbohydrates from starch and simple sugar like fructose and glucose and, therefore, won't make you gain weight. So, a product could have a total carbohydrate content of 12 grams but only two net carb grams.

Guess which figure is printed prominently on the front label? Naturally, the lower figure. Since which product you are more likely to buy and consume in greater quantities if you see a low-carb claim? Naturally, the product that claims to have less calories/ drawn.

You may be tempted to eat more than you should. Thinking you are only consuming two net carb grams might calories in a cloud of 22 grams (200 calories).

To add to the confusion, not to take effective carbs, fit carbs, impact carbs, and net effective carbs are also used.

Whether this is manipulating the truth or not will only be settled by the government steps in to regulate the term (which).

Gaining weight on a low-carb diet

When the low-fat diet was being popular are low-fat products using chocolate, hollering, trans fat, sugar and weight. Health authorities agree this habit and behavior partly contributed to the rise in obesity levels and eventually triggered massive the disagreement with low-fat dieting.

With low-carb products now dominating the market, experts predict that people will begin to gain weight in spite of eating a low-carb diet or "less-carbing," to such that is passing in target since fiber can prevent little effect. Some on the road amount of calories this are eating.

Actually, that prediction is already coming true. According to an article in USA Today by Nancy Hellmich, "Experts studying the Atkins craze say information are also getting calls and grievances online from disappointed dieters, who can't understand why they aren't losing weight. The problem: Dieters are making too many of those new low-carb/protein bars, muffins and brownies mixes, which are low in carbs but loaded with other high in calories".

Hellmich reports that the claim of Dr. Arthur Agatston, author of "The South Beach Diet," has to share of patients who "have gotten tripped up by eating too many low-carb, high-calorie products."

Many dieters, it is reported by Hellmich, who needs for Agatston, told Hellmich that "one woman on the diet was limiting herself to one a day to a piece of low-carb chocolate and she was wondering why she was gaining weight."

Calories still count

So readers how you look at it and no matter which diet fanatic you follow, whether low-fat or low-carb, when it comes to weight loss, calories still matter.

So, when low-carb products start appearing on food supermarket shelves, don't eat too several low-carb. Use your common sense and look at how many calories you will actually be eating.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Inner thigh stretch on stability ball

THIS exercise stretches the muscles in the inner thigh.

Equipment:

Stability ball. As a substitute, you can use a chair.

Exercise technique:

1. Sit on the edge of the ball with both legs spread wide and your feet being outward.

2. Straighten your right leg and point your right foot forward.

3. Roll the ball forward your left leg and if you feel the stretch in your right inner thigh.

4. Hold for the desired length of time. Switch sides.

Performance tips:

1. Sit tall. Don't allow yourself to slouch.

2. Keep breathing as you hold the position.

Target time:

Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds. Do 2 sets or more.

Light up and lose your toes

From page C1

surgically removed. Until I was around the twelfth or so step, and deep would finally start to ease up again.

And it did...temporarily. By March my toe had swelled again, screaming red to the point of being ready to pop. Not long after the end of my toes were inflamed, there are whole foot, there agony settles.

I couldn't walk anymore. My entire foot throbbed, painfully pressing in my tummy as well and impacting my ability to concentrate. I slumped my way just to family from a Hanoi's theater, and for next hour I tried to keep up with even the most idiotic of small talks.

I couldn't read, nor even watch television. I smoked all the more to relax, reaching for my pack whenever I needed a distraction.

By April 21 I was wheeled into the ER and admitted to the hospital. Antibiotics were administered intravenously, and I was given round-the-clock oxycodone pills. Didn't work. So along with the red painkillers I was given morphine. Didn't work either. I even began nurse to wave. Even the sleeping pills didn't combat my sleep.

I was discharged, in limp, in a wheelchair, one foot darker than the other. By May 23, I was in the operating room once more to have my growing toenail removed—again. A deep incision was also made on my toe that exposed my tendons. Another infection, that's why.

Next blood circulation in my foot, however, made it difficult for my wounds to heal. By now continued to throb, and the incision grew wider each day. Eventually my doctors was out-of. It was dangling like a shrunk anyway.

Quit smoking

Throughout summer I was in severe pain, and it decided the second I stood up. My movements were limited even when I had to use the bathroom. It was sheer torture to bathe myself every morning.

Finally, on June 2, I ended my 13-year nicotine addiction—my fourth attempt to stop smoking. Slowly my condition improved. I was able to bend my foot without excruciating pain and, much later, move my toes that were once bloated stiff.

I entered walking again, not with ease but with a cane to rest found. By September I was rid of my cane, taking on awkward step after the other. By Nov. 27, I was back in the gym, and a week after was off painkillers. At last, I was able to sleep without popping pills.

I was diagnosed with Buerger's Disease or Really only has December Prize review. I understand several tests to rule out other conditions had to get gout, diabetes, etc.

There is no cure for Buerger's Disease. The damage is irreversible. The only way to control the symptoms is to quit smoking.

My hospital bills alone totaled almost P250,000, excluding the thousands I spent every month on medications.

My battle is far from over. Today my toe and has yet to grow back properly. It probably never will, but I haven't completely given up on it.

I am still on medication and, yes, my toe still hurts occasionally. It might take two years for my blood circulation to be okay again, it says.

But for now, my toe is once again useful. I can sit but walk properly—and finally wear shoes—like everyone else. Who knows, next time I get high-heels to strut once again.

E-mail the author at aquinino@inquirer.com.ph

State-of-the-art sports shoes

SPORTS Resources Inc., exclusive distributor of Prince sports products in the Philippines, introduces its line of performance tennis and indoor shoes: the MP Lite, QT Mens Response, QT Women's Approach, MP Oldie's Indoor II U.S. and QT Soccer Indoor.

The shoes boast of state-of-the-art features and trendy designs. They can be worn in and out of the courts.

The MP (Tampa) Star 9) U.S.) use has cross-patented Micron Fit technology and Dual Cush Lock System. They weigh around the feet like a glove for a snug fit.

The patented QT is Quad-Flex footwear has offers the same cushioning, side fit, wide stability features and performance as the Prince Tour Lite. For players, the shoes will be available in QT Mens Response, QT Women's Approach and QT Soccer Indoor.

QT shoes' state-of-the-art features include EVA midsole with PU footbed insert for optimum cushioning, stability and comfort. Blood Blood Sweat Tears

optimum shock dispersion for optimum comfort, molded vibration crisscross midfoot shank, removable EVA sockliner with padded PVC heel-toe and heel inserts with anti-bacterial treatment.

The MP (Tampa) Star Shape Fabric Inserts offers added maximum comfort and fit to performance footwear. It has, among others, rubber outsole, lightweight PU midsole, removable EVA sockliner, midfoot webbing, extra toe drop, medial drop diversion, soft synthetic leather upper and slip lasted construction.

Prince Tennis and Indoor Shoes are now available at all Toby's Sports shoes in outlets.

Ensuring quality hospital service

TO most people, travel quality and value for money is important.

The International Standards for Organizations and International in ISO bring international standards developed by distinguished organizations that become the customer's guarantee of quality.

The Joint Commission International (JCI) is among those groups that set high quality care standards. Accreditation by JCI is the gold seal of recognition for health care providers. JCI has set standards that help hospitals continuously improve performance. Methods and results are measured for continuous improvement. In accreditation signifies a hospital's desire to provide the best service.

JCI is a subsidiary of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). The international accreditation program was launched in 1999.

A 16-member team representing seven major regions of the world developed standards that were internationally applicable. The standards were based on international consensus standards. They are uniform, measurable requirements for structures, processes and outcomes for hospitals.

Standards assess organizational performance and stimulate continuous improvements. JCI has so far accredited 42 hospitals in 11 countries outside of the United States and Canada.

An organization wishing to apply for Joint Commission International Accreditation (JCIA) should submit the application form and a completed self-assessment manual. The application must be accompanied by a non-refundable application fee. The self-assessment manual is a comprehensive questionnaire which addresses the standards mentioned above. It is used to determine the hospital's readiness for survey.

Within 60 days of receipt of the application, the JCI will send a survey team to the hospital. The survey team will be composed of physicians, nurses and administrators who are experts in their fields. The survey team will be composed of physicians, nurses and administrators who are experts in their fields. The survey team will review the hospital's self-assessment manual and conduct interviews with hospital staff, using international standards as the basis for evaluation.

The survey team will present its findings to the hospital's management and staff. The hospital will then have 30 days to submit a plan of action to address any deficiencies found during the survey.

The JCI will review the plan of action and make a decision on accreditation. If accredited, the hospital will receive a certificate valid for three years during which an organization is expected to maintain the standards and quality improvement process. At the end of the period, the organization may re-apply for accreditation.

10 keys to mastering the self

EVERYONE has the power to heal himself or herself. While there is an easy way to achieve this, countless self-help books have been written on the subject.

Here is a set of principles from one of my favorite gurus, Dr. Deepak Chopra.

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Listen to your body. The human body has more than 36 means of expression to relay pains and discomforts. Attend to your pain and see your physical system.

Emotional pain is easily discovered. When faced with a choice in behavior or action, ask your body, "What is your feeling about this?" If there is any sign of discomfort or physical discomfort, Don't heed. If you get a pleasant feeling, then go ahead.

Listen to the inner. The present is all you really have. Say attention to what you have and what is not now. Make every moment count. Let things be and allow them to flow naturally. Stressing against conditions will only cause it more. Be kind to the wisdom of your present reality.

Make time for silence. Find inner life chances in silence, not in noise. When you are guided by the quiet, your thinking is clearer and your attention more focused.

Stop looking for constant approval. Begin liberating yourself by relying on self-motivation. Seeking the approval of others only diminishes your confidence growth. When you rely on yourself, your inner worth will grow. When you rely more on others for approval, you weaken your inner worth.

Let go of your anger. Giving in to anger or not expressing your opposition to someone will only hurt you. Anger is a struggle with emotions, which is a part of yourself. It prevents you have no power over yourself.

What you want hate or someone to think what you want dare to express it.

What you love most is what you want most for yourself. This is the secret of relationships. When you have better self-knowledge, you will understand the depth of this statement.

The last burden yourself by judging others—even yourself. All things can be understood and overcome by forgiveness. If you judge all the time, you run off understanding.

Your body, mind and spirit are not toxic waste dumpsites. Don't contaminate your body with unhealthy diets. Do not pollute your mind and heart with negative emotions like fear and doubt. What is innate you will reflect on the outside.

Behavior should be motivated by love not by fear. Not totally from memory that refuses to forget past hurts and disappointments. When you motivate your behavior by love, you use your energy to power yourself from pulling feet again. But you cannot improve the past on the present, and this cannot insulate you from future pain. When you act motivated by love yourself, you are powered by love.

The universe is moved by a love and intelligence called God. The more aligned you are to that power, the stronger yourself be, and your life will be more directed.

Breath of life

An integral part of mastering the self is breathing. This is the way to control the energy of prana that enters and leaves our body. It is believed that changing our breathing patterns also alters the emotions.

In one case, agitated hospital patients were asked to breathe slowly almost immediately their tension eases.

The breath of life can be conserved through fresh food, pure air and rest, sunlight, moderate exercise, balanced refined breath, non-violence behavior and awareness for life, loving and positive emotions (and these are not expensive).

In India, various systems of yoga teach controlled breathing exercises as Pranayama aimed at relieving stress and letting the body find balance.

Find out your anxious and its breathing pattern in a chart on the next page.

De-stress breathing exercise

Play soft, gentle music or, if you like, sit outdoors and listen to the wind, running water or birds. Let the music flow in and out of your ears and eyelids. Repeat, letting the music flow through your eyes, near your nostrils and mouth, then your entire body.

Keep your attention on the chest. Breathe in and out through your heart. Slow, be silent and become more aware of your body. This exercise is good for relaxing the nervous system and it renders harmony with nature.

Goes milk bath.

In a tub of warm water, add one pail (about eight full) glasses of coconut milk. Avoid is better but powdered coconut will do. Add 20 drops of vanilla to counteract you soak bath. Forget your cares... Relax, enjoy.

Love and light!

Reference: "Ageless Body, Timeless Mind" by Dr. Deepak Chopra

Setting the record straight

Part 1

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime J. Licauco

MT 12th book, "On Christianity, New Age and Reincarnation: three Perspectives on Old Religious Issues?," was launched at Shangri-La Hotel and Bookshop on Jan. 16.

About a hundred guests attended, including the cast of resounding like Blanche Arvelo; Jacinto Arboleda; Cory Quirino, Rosanna Roces, Boy Abunda, former tourism secretary Antonio Gonzalez, former health secretary Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, former vice head and become columnist Ramon Tulfo, newspaper columnist Fr. Bel San Luis, MD, cosmogenic expert Fr. Jose de Jesus, SJ. Anvil Publishing Inc. assistant general manager Karina Bolasco; Brazilian Embassy's Minister Counselor Carlos de Carvalho, wife of the Portuguese Ambassador, Cecilia Gutierrez Jacinto of Chit Chats; writers Gilda Cordero-Fernando and Maud Primicias; retired doctors of medicine; psychics, businessmen; healers; and others.

Dr. Jesus Villamor, who wrote the foreword to the book, was stranded in Singapore but faxed a message. Later in the evening, former senator and education secretary Raul S. Roco came, gave brief remarks and cheered the remaining guests.

Explanation

The following is the speech I made during the launching, explaining why I wrote this book:

"A book does not just spring out of nowhere. It is a product of close collaboration of many people. So before I talk about this 12th book of mine, I would like to acknowledge several people who made this book possible.

"First, I want to thank the countless readers of my column, 'Inner Awareness,' in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the many listeners of my weekly educational program, 'Inner Mind on Radio,' over dzRH, who asked questions and gave their comments on the various topics discussed.

"I thank Chito Bunal-Francisco, lifestyle section editor of Inquirer and her staff, for their constant support and confidence in my writer. The same expression of gratitude goes to Inquirer editor-in-chief, Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc, who has kept me on board for the last 16 years.

"Of course, I should not forget my publisher, Anvil Publishing Inc., represented here by its assistant general manager, Karina Bolasco, and her staff, for their encouragement and support, and also the effervescent Ces Drilon for hosting this book launching and cocktails in this beautiful gallery and magazine shop.

"Now, as to why I came out with this book, 'On Christianity, New Age and Reincarnation, New Perspectives on Old Religious Issues.' Well, I do not think my critics, led by Rev. Romeo Intengan, SJ, head of the Jesus Order in the Philippines and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), whom Inker accused on that I am engaged in so-called occult practices and whose author and confessor inclusion of my name in its Primer on New Age, made me decide to come out with the book to explain my side of the controversy and define for them and the general public what it is that I really do and what I believe in.

"In the course of researching materials for inclusion in this book, it became very clear to me that I must expand its coverage to include other religious issues that the Church has either ignored or torn unopposed, such as reincarnation, and the concepts of the lost Gnostic gospels that were found in Nag Hammadi, Upper Egypt in 1945, and the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 in the Qumran caves."

The new book is now available in all branches of National Book Store, Powerbooks and Magnet.

Address letters to the column to 888 Prime Plaza 1, 106 Legaspi St., Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. Call 8-8722600 or 09206838 E-mail: licauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://licauco.tripod.com. Listen to my DZRH radio program every Sunday, 6-6:30 a.m.

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Manalo, M.D.

Looking to know more about your health? Unsure how MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of PHILHEALTH benefits? Get your information straight from PHILHEALTH's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MANALO.

FAQs (Frequently asked questions)

How do I make sure that all the health services being rendered to me are covered under my program?

The easiest way to make sure that all healthcare services received are covered is to follow the guidelines and procedures in your MEDICard guidebook. That requires having all care managed through the medical coordinator and confirming sure that authorizations are obtained as required before receiving services. The medical coordinator will discuss with you any limits or exclusions in your healthcare program. When in need of further information, you can reach our 24/7 call center at 845-8888 or 867-2630.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Recently accredited MEDICard healthcare provider, **Dr. Mario R. Paz** specializes in Orthopedics. He has a Medicine graduate of UERM-MMC. finished his residency for his specialization at UP-PGH. He also subspecializes in spine surgeries. Dra. Marlo, as he is frequently referred to, is a Fellow of the Philippine Orthopedic Association and the Philippine College of Surgeons. He is also a Diplomat of the Philippine Spine Society. For your consultation needs, you may visit his clinic in Room 802, Cathedral Heights Bldg. of St. Luke's Medical Center (N) MC's from Mondays to Fridays, 2 to 6 PM and on Saturdays from 10 AM to 12 noon and again from 2 to 4 PM.

PBSP Recognition

MEDICard joins Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), a social development foundation dedicated to helping Filipino people rise from poverty. MEDICard's President, Dr. Nestor Mendoza received a plaque from PBSP Vice Chairman Pangilinan Cruz from LJ and PBSP President, Ma. Luisa Perez Rubio (2nd from L) during a recently concluded inauguration of new topics. With the new partnership, MEDICard pledges to set aside out of its operating funds an amount devoted to social development through the foundation.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE HEAD. You can call the DR. NICKY S. MANOTOK at 837 Guijillermo Bldg. G.F. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City, or e-mail him at: drnicky@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 845-8888. For group or corporate membership, dial 843-8888, 817-8238 or 817-4888 and look for a membership consultant. For Cebu Sales Office call (032) 232-8855. For Davao Sales Office call (082) 224-8855 / 305-8888.

TEXT MEDICARD, key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch Mobile) or 4027 (Smart & Talk N' Text). VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.medicardphils.com

MEDICard is the first HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asia Pacific Region to be ISO CERTIFIED

EVER

TWO HEROES, BOTH persons of Paolo dal Pallo's movie Kaya Ko Ma'rides David at Rob Dreezal Clinic de bar jok se ako applies Bandida tuwerak ya dee I Dreezal-dal a child's needy at Rob at Rob.

Oral hygiene must begin early

PARENTS should help their children establish good oral hygiene practices as early as possible.

In Manalo Dentil of the Rob Dreezal Clinic at SM Manila said parents should not wait for an emergency like a tooth infection before bringing a child to a dentist. Dr. Manalo says the child think of a dental visit as a painful experience creating a negative impression about the dentist, the treatment and the clinic.

A child must be brought to the dentist for his first visit as soon as the first permanent teeth comes out, between six to 12 months of age, Dr. David said. The visit will enable the dentist to teach parents the proper way to take care of their child's teeth to prevent serious dental problems and to familiarize the child with the dentist and the clinic setting.

Dr. David said their clinic could teach parents properly the different ways to care for their children's teeth as their milk or primary teeth will be replaced by strong permanent ones.

Dr. David is assisted by three pediatric dentists—Dr. Diane Martinez, Dr. Weena Sison, Dr. Gay Bautista, and our general dentist, Dr. Cat Espino.

For starters, the team recommends a fluoride varnish treatment for infants and toddlers who easily develop tooth decay because they are frequently put to bed with a milk bottle. Ideally, they should have the treatment every four months. Tooth enamel should be applied on newly erupted teeth of a child between 6 to 8 years old. A chair or sponge plate to surround the enamel is applied to the chewing surfaces of the teeth to "seal out" food and plaque, thus reducing tooth decay.

The dentists said early loss of temporary teeth could cause poor alignment of the succeeding permanent teeth that would require a child to wear braces.

Rob Dreezal Clinic is at the 5-L of SM Manila. It has a play area to keep kids entertained while waiting. It is open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday to Sunday. Call 521-1117.

THE MANILA Philatelic Club Inc. (PPCI) marked its 10th anniversary recently at Mr. Morales, Ugu, Batangas. PPCI, which organizes philatelic exhibitions and seminars aimed at promoting as a sport, is located by president Ronald Pueblo (3rd from right). Clinics are scheduled every month. Call him (0916) 719 9810 or e-mail ronpbl_ric@yahoo.com.